



# Safety+Health

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## More paid sick leave linked to increased use of preventive health care: study

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Boca Raton, FL — The number of paid sick days workers have may determine whether they will get a flu shot or use other preventive health care services, according to a recent study from Florida Atlantic University and Cleveland State University.

Researchers looked at more than 3,200 responses to the 2014 [National Longitudinal Survey of Youth](#) from workers 49 to 57 years old. They found that workers with 10 or more paid sick days were 26 percent to 85 percent more likely than workers with two or fewer paid sick days to get a flu shot or have their cholesterol, blood pressure or blood sugar checked. Women with at least six paid sick days were 55 percent more likely to get a preventive mammogram.

The median number of paid sick days in the study was seven. Nearly 1 in 4 respondents had zero paid sick days. “Unlike most industrialized countries, in the United States, paid sick leave is inconsistently included as part of workplace benefits packages,” a March 8 FAU press release states. Additionally, some local regulations regarding the number of paid sick days employers must provide depends on the number of workers they employ.

“Lack of paid sick leave not only influences work health, it also influences public health,” Patricia Stoddard-Dare, study co-author and associate professor of social work at CSU, said in the release. “Workers who lack paid sick leave are more likely to go to work when they are sick and spread contagious diseases, such as influenza, in the workplace. Paid sick leave is incredibly valuable because it provides both job protection and pay during times when employees must miss work for health-related reasons.”

The researchers recommend more evening and weekend hours at doctors’ offices, and bringing routine preventive care services to the workplace.

The study was [published](#) Feb. 12 in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.