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Putin Tells Officials With Flu to Stay at Home to Curb 'Losses'

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Days after the announcement of an anti-crisis plan to beat Russia's economic malaise, President Vladimir Putin has suggested a strategy of his own to curb government spending — don't bring your flu into work.

Putin told his government officials on Wednesday to call in sick if they caught a cold, adding that the Cabinet was "sustaining losses" from the seasonal outbreak of illness.

The advice appeared prompted by the absence of a number of high ranking officials at a government meeting on Wednesday, including Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and his deputies Igor Shuvalov and Olga Golodets, RIA Novosti reported.

"Somehow the Cabinet cannot manage the flu, I think it is sustaining losses," Putin told a government meeting Wednesday, according to a transcript published on the Kremlin website.

"I'm asking that nobody comes in to work sick," he said, adding the issue was "no joke."

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