

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Health Department urges public to be smart consumers of information**

**(Lawrence, KS)** – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department is urging the public to strike a balance between fear and complacency in its preparation for a possible severe outbreak of the novel H1N1 virus.

The Health Department continues to receive reports of people with influenza-like illness, which is unusual for this time of year.

“We suspect that these illnesses are due to the novel H1N1 virus, which most people have no immunity to,” Dr. Lori Hougham, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Health Officer/Medical Consultant. “The good news so far is H1N1 has been a mild upper respiratory illness for most of us.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends specific H1N1 testing to be conducted only for patients who are hospitalized. The diagnosis for most people is based on the symptoms: i.e. fever (100 degrees or higher), cough and sore throat.

“At this point, the best thing to do if you have these symptoms is to stay home, drink plenty of water, get enough rest and use fever reducers,” Hougham said.

The Health Department is working with Douglas County school districts, universities and others to monitor influenza-like illness. Plans are underway to make the H1N1 vaccine available sometime in October. The immunization is voluntary for everyone, however getting vaccinated will greatly reduce your risk of contracting the disease.

“H1N1 influenza is in our communities,” said Dan Partridge, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director. “I encourage Douglas County residents to stay informed of the situation and plan for the possibility of illness in their family.”

To prepare for the 2009-2010 flu season:

- Stay informed. Go to credible sources of information, such as Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department ([www.lidchealth.org](http://www.lidchealth.org)), Lawrence Public Library ([www.lawrence.lib.ks.us](http://www.lawrence.lib.ks.us)), Kansas Department of Health

and Environment ([www.kdheks.gov](http://www.kdheks.gov)), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, exercise and eat balanced meals.
- Get immunized for H1N1 when the vaccine becomes available.
- Stay home when sick and plan for child care at home if your child is ill.
- Know your work sick leave policy and ask how your employer can assist you in caring for yourself and your family. Returning to the workplace or school while still ill increases the risk of spreading the virus to others.
- Identify a separate room in the house for the care of sick family members.

Check [www.ldchealth.org](http://www.ldchealth.org) for printable materials and more information on H1N1.

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[www.ldchealth.org](http://www.ldchealth.org)

**NOTE TO EDITOR/REPORTER:** Dr. Chris Penn, a Lawrence physician who specializes in infectious diseases, and Dr. Lori Hougham, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Health Officer/Medical Consultant, are available for interviews. Contact Lisa Horn (785) 843-3060 at the Health Department for more information.