

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Department reports increase in diarrheal illnesses in Lawrence

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department's communicable disease nurses continue to receive reports of highly contagious diarrheal illnesses, such as shigellosis and norovirus, in Lawrence. There have been cases of illness in day care centers, a fraternity, retirement homes and a community event during the past month.

The Health Department urges residents to be mindful about good hand-washing to help prevent spread of illnesses. When sick, it's important to stay home from work, school and day care and not to attend community events. Individuals who are sick should not return to work or school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.

These illnesses occur when people put something in their mouths or swallow something that has come into contact with stool or vomit of a person infected with the disease. Exposure to even a tiny amount of contaminated matter — too small to see — can cause infection.

"These illnesses can spread quickly, so it's important to stay home when sick," Director of Clinic Services Kim Ens said.

Symptoms may include: diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain and vomiting. If you have severe symptoms, contact your health care provider.

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