



New Flu, Old Flu, You and the Flu -August 26, 2009

Does Franklin County have a confirmed case of H1N1 Influenza? As of this morning, August 26, 2009, there have been no confirmed cases among Franklin County residents. But, but, how can that be? My doctor said..... And I heard from my church..... And the school teacher told us..... And

So, lets talk about testing. The state protocol for subtyping influenza has changed from testing all suspected influenza A cases to only testing hospitalized patients and some random tests at ILINet sites (Influenza-Like-Illness surveillance) and some safety net clinics. What that means is that we may or may not ever have a case “confirmed” for Franklin County.

How important is it to be confirmed with H1N1? Now that we know that H1N1 is circulating in the population throughout Kansas and we know what population groups are most susceptible, testing everyone won't be necessary. H1N1 is a sub-type of Influenza A. Seasonal influenza (A and B) can also be sub-typed. Sub-typing influenza is very expensive and the states do not have the capacity to continue that process for everyone. Knowing the sub-type doesn't change the precautions you should take to prevent its spread or the treatment you receive if you have influenza. Knowing what sub-types are circulating and among whom does affect the steps that public health takes to protect the community, such as establishing a priorities for vaccination.

What should we do until an H1N1 vaccine is available? Follow general guidelines to stay healthy. When the seasonal influenza vaccine is available – Be Vaccinated. Franklin County Health Department will begin offering seasonal flu vaccine in mid-September.

What else should we do? - Remain Calm.

- **Stay informed.** Visit the CDC, KDHE, of Franklin County websites for information, talk to your medical provider or call the health department at 785-229-3530.
- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - Keep 3-6 feet between you and someone who is ill with influenza like illness (coughing and sneezing)
 - Disinfect or wash surfaces that are shared with many people.
 - Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them for 24 hours after you are fever free without the help of fever reducing medications.