

DPH Encourages Good Habits to Avoid Swine Flu

Flu Cases Expected to Increase during Back to School, Regular Flu Season

Department for Public Health (DPH) officials are reminding Kentuckians to practice basic precautions such as hand washing and staying home when sick to help prevent the spread of novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu) as the state moves into the back to school season.

"Like the rest of the nation, we have continued to detect cases of H1N1 over the summer," said William Hacker, M.D., commissioner of DPH. "While the spread of H1N1 has been at a reduced rate in the past few months, we remain concerned about how widespread it may become as we move into the fall and our regular flu season. We want to remind Kentuckians to stay aware of new developments related to the flu and to focus on practicing good health habits."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has told states to expect an increase in the number of cases of the H1N1 flu strain first identified in the spring, and which has since been declared a worldwide pandemic. Kentucky is also planning for a potential H1N1 vaccination campaign once vaccine becomes available.

Because the flu can spread easily among people in close contact and H1N1 has been more common in young people, health officials say it is especially important for those in school, day care or similar settings to practice good hygiene habits during the coming months. Common sense precautions to prevent illness include: avoiding close contact with those who are ill; staying home when sick; covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth; and frequent hand washing.

Symptoms of H1N1 influenza include fever, chills, headache, sore throat, cough, body aches, and may include vomiting or diarrhea. Individuals at higher risk for complications—such as those with chronic health conditions or who are pregnant—should contact a health care provider early, in case treatment with antiviral medication is necessary.

For more information on swine flu, visit: www.flu.gov. Individuals can also visit <http://healthalerts.ky.gov> for information on H1N1 and Kentucky, or follow KYHealthAlerts on Twitter to be notified when new information is posted at the Web site.

Swine Flu Summit Planned

Kentucky will hold a statewide Pandemic Influenza Summit on Sept. 3 at the Frankfort Convention Center. The summit will aid in Kentucky's preparations for any developments related to the novel H1N1 influenza strain (swine flu) during this year's flu season, including a potential vaccination campaign.

The summit will bring together representatives from a wide range of sectors, including business, public and private K-12 education, secondary education, law enforcement and public safety organizations, health care workers, public health workers, other state agencies and faith-based organizations.

Attendees will hear from public health experts about the current H1N1 situation and what to expect in the fall. Information will also be provided by representatives from schools, businesses, health care and public health agencies on current plans for response to pandemic flu and

related preparedness activities. Breakout sessions will encourage in-depth exploration of these topics, and more.

At the recent federal H1N1 Preparedness Summit, which brought together leaders from all 50 states and U.S. territories, states were encouraged to hold their own summits.

Information on registration will be available soon.

Nominate Employees for Ambassador Awards

Nominations can be made through the end of August for the Governor's Ambassador Awards. The awards were established by the Personnel Cabinet and designed to encourage, support, acknowledge and reward state employees who embody the principles of Kentucky's Unbridled Spirit.

The Kentucky Governor's Ambassador Award highlights stories of employees who have significantly and positively impacted the lives and experiences of their co-workers, customers and community at large. This employee recognition program showcases stories that recognize individuals and team performance in the following categories:

- Service and Volunteerism Award
- Courage Award
- Leadership Award
- Professional Achievement Award
- Customer Service Award
- Teamwork Award

Nominations will be accepted through Aug. 31. Learn how to nominate a co-worker or other deserving state employee at <http://personnel.ky.gov/emprel/GovernorsAmbassadorAward.htm>.

Living Well: Complete the Puzzle

Do you sometimes feel that achieving a healthy lifestyle is like completing a 500 piece puzzle? With a wide and ever-growing range of "expert" opinions to choose from on how to live a healthy life, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. My suggestion? Try yoga. Yoga could be the missing piece that fits your healthy lifestyle puzzle.

A regular cardiovascular and strength-training routine, along with a nutritious diet, will help fight off everyday stressors. But yoga includes your mind in a total body workout. I am not referring to chanting mantras or torturous poses, rather the concentration that will help you increase flexibility, everyday posture, strength, muscle tone and proper breathing techniques. There are several different types of yoga, so select one that best fits your personality and goals.

As with any type of new exercise routine, follow the same process and start out gradually. Here are some things to consider before starting.

- Find the type of yoga that appeals to you.
- Find a facility or environment in which you feel comfortable practicing.
- Watch a class to see if they are focusing on your specific needs.

If you would like to try yoga class and you are in the Frankfort area, classes are available in the CHR cafeteria on Mondays at 4:45 p.m. on Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31. If you need additional information, please contact Kris Hayslett at kris.hayslett@ky.gov. If you are outside of Frankfort, research your community and see what classes are offered at local community centers, fitness centers or area churches.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

If you go to work with a bad attitude, it's possible that you may "infect" your co-workers with your outlook.

Studies at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania show that demonstrating our foul disposition can have a ripple effect in professional settings – you can "catch" a bad mood. It's important to manage our emotions to retain colleagues' respect and keep negativity from taking over the workplace.

Courtney Lynch, co-founder of leadership consulting group Lead Star, suggests these tips for keeping your bad mood in check.

Admit you're feeling crabby, but keep it to yourself. Ranting at work takes the spotlight away from your accomplishments and puts it on your emotions. Use self-control until you can vent on your own time.

Get in the present. Don't dwell on what happened yesterday or how you can't possibly meet next week's deadline. Dig in to your work and get things done.

Get physical. Exercise or even a minute of deep breathing can have a positive effect on your mood.