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H1N1 Precautions for Pregnant Women

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – By now you have likely heard about the Novel H1N1 Virus. What you may not be aware of is the fact that pregnant women are one of the groups at greatest risk. As a reminder, symptoms of H1N1 include:

- Fever (100 degrees or higher)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Body aches
- In some cases, vomiting and diarrhea

“It is very important for pregnant women to call their doctor or health care provider if they have flu symptoms,” stated Sedgwick County Health Department Director Claudia Blackburn. “Flu can harm you and your baby. You doctor will decide if you need treatment.”

Vaccination can protect both the expecting mother and the growing baby. This is the rationale for pregnant women to be at the top of the list for H1N1 vaccination when it becomes available. It is important to note that pregnant women must receive the vaccine through injection; they cannot receive flu mist.

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Pregnant women who are otherwise healthy have been severely impacted by the H1N1 flu virus. In comparison to the general public, a large proportion of pregnant women infected with the virus have been hospitalized. Severe illness and death has occurred in pregnant women.

Soon the Sedgwick County Health Department will begin to receive some doses of the H1N1 vaccine. The Sedgwick County Health Department is working with private providers and other partner agencies to plan for upcoming vaccination clinics. Pregnant women should continue to watch, read and listen to the local media for further instructions in the coming weeks. Also, stay up to date on vaccination plans by visiting www.sedgwickcounty.org. A fact sheet on vaccines is available at this site. Call 660-5558 with H1N1 questions or e-mail flu@sedgwick.gov.

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