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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SEDGWICK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PROMOTES
“CLEAN HANDS WEEK”**

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – The week of September 20-26 has been set aside as National Clean Hands Week. The Sedgwick County Health Department is promoting the importance of hand washing to area schools, faith-based organizations, adult living centers and employers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand washing is the single most important action one can take to prevent the onset of illness. With improved hand washing habits, the amount of days students miss school and adults miss work will be greatly reduced. With the current rapid spread of H1N1, hand washing has never been more important.

“Demand for hand washing education has been through the roof,” said Sedgwick County Health Department Director Claudia Blackburn. “Our Health Promotion staff has given more than 35 hand washing presentations in the last month to community groups and we anticipate at least that many through October.”

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Individuals should wash their hands before preparing food and eating. You should also wash your hands after:

- Handling uncooked meat and poultry
- Changing diapers
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Blowing one's nose into a tissue
- Coming in from outdoors
- Using the bathroom.

Just running ones hands under water is not adequate to remove germs and bacteria.

Proper hand washing includes the following steps:

1. Wet hands with running water.
2. Pump soap into palms.
3. Rub together to make a lather.
4. Scrub hands vigorously for 15 seconds.
5. Clean under fingernails.
6. Rinse soap off hands.
7. Dry hands thoroughly.
8. Use a dry paper towel to turn water off and open the door.

As a general rule, it takes 15-20 seconds to wash ones hands fully. Besides counting, you can sing the ABC's all the way through, while you wash!

For more information, hand washing print materials or to request a group presentation, visit www.sedgwickcounty.org, call the Sedgwick County Health Department at 660-7350 or email buttle@sedgwick.gov.

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