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The first positive case of H1N1 influenza in Putnam County was confirmed last week by the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory.

“We knew it was just a matter of time before we had a confirmed case in our county,” said Ericka Klingner, the Putnam County Health Department Administrator. “We will most likely continue to see an increase in cases and people just need to be aware of what they can do to stay healthy.”

There are every day actions people can take to stay healthy:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to those of seasonal influenza and may include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and runny or stuffy nose. A significant number of people who have been infected also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

Seek medical care if you become sick with flu-like symptoms. If you do become ill the recommendation is to stay home from work or school for at least 24 hours after fever has subsided without the use of fever reducing medicines.

There are medicines to treat H1N1 influenza and both options require a prescription. Vaccine production for H1N1 is currently underway and once available will initially focus on key populations including those who are at higher risk of disease or complications, those who are likely to come in contact with novel H1N1, and those who could infect young infants. While the seasonal influenza vaccine will not protect against H1N1, it is still very important that people get their seasonal flu vaccine as usual.

For more information please visit www.putnamcohealthdept.org or www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu.