

Infant diagnosed with H1N1



Written by Mandy Hochstedler

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Parents are urged to keep infants at home and churches are encouraged to postpone Sunday school classes for the next several weeks following a 3-month-old's diagnosis Thursday with the H1N1 virus, County Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott reports.

The infant was diagnosed by Dr. Hoddinott at his private practice, Maple Leaf Family & Sports Medicine, 2211 Timber Trail. He said the child was doing well during a follow-up visit Friday, and is at

home.

None of the child's family members was sickened with flu-like symptoms, and the infant's only outside contact was at church. Consequently, the health commissioner is recommending that churches cancel their nursery care and Sunday school classes for young children this week and the upcoming two weeks, as infants are especially susceptible to the highly contagious virus.

This recommendation came Friday afternoon without the time to contact the approximately 84 churches in the county prior to Sunday services. Typically, the Logan County Emergency Management Agency assists with quickly communicating such medical alerts through "blast faxes," but this was not possible because many churches may not have a fax machine.

Therefore, Dr. Hoddinott hopes that local churches instead will pay attention to local media reports today.

"There wasn't time to meet with the ministerial administration," he said. "We'll see what we can do in talking with them next week."

In addition, the health commissioner is concerned for the well being of infants in daycare centers around the county. However, he is not making the recommendation to close these facilities.

"I don't know how you can close daycares," he said. "I can't tell parents that they can't work for two weeks. That would have a huge impact on society."

Dr. Hoddinott also noted a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistic — more children have already died from the H1N1 virus in the U.S. during this current flu season than the number of children who died from the seasonal flu during the previous season.

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