



First probable H1N1 (swine) flu case identified at an Alabama university
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 4:15 p.m.

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces the first probable H1N1 (swine) influenza case in a college student attending Troy University. The female student in her 20s was diagnosed by a health care provider and is recovering at home. No incidents of travel were involved.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "We do not recommend closing any university based on the H1N1 influenza experience. An influenza case on a university campus should be treated as an influenza case in the community unlike in a day care, elementary school, middle school or high school."

The health department is working with Troy University and Pike County officials. Students who are ill should not attend class or group gatherings. Graduates or family members who are ill should not attend graduation ceremonies. Ill persons should limit contact with others. If they develop fever, muscle aches and respiratory symptoms they should contact their medical provider before coming to an office or clinic setting.

To date the department has identified a total of 14 cases of H1N1 influenza with 4 confirmed cases and 10 probable cases awaiting confirmation as H1N1 influenza. Ten of the cases are in children under 13 years of age and four are in adults. Eleven of the cases are associated with schools in Madison County.

The Alabama Department of Public Health does not recommend cancelling large group events based on concerns of H1N1 influenza. Individuals should try to curtail the spread of influenza by realizing the virus is circulating in the population. Individuals who are ill should not attend group events to avoid spreading the virus to others. Persons with underlying medical conditions which would put them at greater potential risk are also advised to avoid group events.

Prescription antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu and Relenza provide effective treatment and should be taken within the first 48 hours of illness.

All persons are reminded to follow these precautions:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a sleeve or tissue.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose with your hands.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them. Patients experiencing severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should call their health care provider.

Those with underlying medical conditions may want to avoid large group gatherings. Individuals control their own individual risk of acquiring infection. Parents are encouraged to keep sick children home from school and other activities until they are well and to follow their doctors' recommendations

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to the symptoms of traditional influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 influenza. Ill persons should voluntarily isolate themselves from others for seven days after they experience symptoms. Close contacts should limit their contact with others for a period of seven days from the time they were exposed.

The incubation period from the moment of exposure to H1N1 influenza until symptoms develop is two to seven days. Individuals are infectious to others one day before until seven days after symptoms develop. Persons who develop symptoms of respiratory illness should contact their medical provider who can arrange for tests to determine whether the disease is due to H1N1 flu.

To address the H1N1 flu situation, a portion of the Strategic National Stockpile of antiviral drugs and supplies has been prepositioned at regional locations in public health areas throughout the state.

For information about H1N1 influenza, please visit www.adph.org.