



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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First cases of novel H1N1 influenza identified in Etowah and Mobile counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has identified 14 new cases of novel H1N1 influenza, including the first cases identified in Etowah and Mobile counties. This brings the total number of probable and confirmed cases in the state to 55.

Of all probable and confirmed cases, 32 individuals are residents of Madison County, 7 of Jefferson County, 6 of Montgomery County, 3 of Limestone County, 2 of Pike County, 2 of Mobile County, 1 of Shelby County, 1 of Calhoun County, and 1 of Etowah County.

The age range of novel H1N1 cases is from 2 to 70, with a median age of 9. Thirty-six of the state's 55 total cases are children under 13 years of age. Of the 32 cases in Madison County, 27 are also children under 13 years of age.

The Alabama Department of Public Health laboratory has received more than 1,500 samples and more than 900 have been tested for novel H1N1 influenza. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has validated the laboratory to perform the testing that confirms novel influenza H1N1 cases.

CDC recommends implementation of measures that focus on keeping all students, faculty and staff with symptoms of influenza out of schools and child care facilities during their period of illness when they are potentially infectious to others.

Students and faculty with influenza-like illness should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care until they meet both of the following criteria: a minimum of seven days from onset of illness and 24 hours free of symptoms. Students or staff who appear to have influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during a school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

The Alabama Department of Public Health does not recommend cancelling large group events based on concerns of novel 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 place them at greater potential risk are also advised to avoid group events.

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

The symptoms of novel 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 novel H1N1 influenza. Close associates 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 novel 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.

The department Web site at www.adph.org will provide regular updates of case counts of novel H1N1 influenza within the state.