



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Novel H1N1 influenza recently identified in Coffee County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has confirmed two cases of novel H1N1 influenza in Coffee County residents recently. Statewide the total number of confirmed cases is 59, and there are also five probable cases.

Of the confirmed cases, 33 individuals are residents of Madison County, 7 of Montgomery County, 4 of Jefferson County, 4 of Shelby County, 2 of Limestone County, 2 of Mobile County, 2 of Pike County, 1 of Blount County, 1 of Etowah County and 1 is undetermined.

Regular seasonal influenza continues to circulate with novel H1N1 influenza. In Alabama approximately three fourths of all influenza viruses being detected through laboratory surveillance are novel H1N1 viruses, with the other one fourth being regular seasonal influenza viruses.

The Alabama Department of Public Health has received validation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to perform the testing that confirms probable novel influenza H1N1 cases not previously confirmed by CDC. All novel H1N1 cases in Alabama are now being confirmed by the state health laboratory.

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 for seven days, even if symptoms resolve sooner. The child with symptoms should return to school or day care only after being well for at least 24 hours. 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 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.

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 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.

The department Web site at www.adph.org will be updated regularly with any changes in number of novel H1N1 influenza cases within the state.