



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104  
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

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#### **ADPH continues influenza monitoring**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

##### **CONTACT:**

Jim McVay, Dr.P.A.  
800-252-1818

The Alabama Department of Public Health is working with health care providers and hospitals to identify any possible cases of swine flu in Alabama. Eight samples from individuals with flu-like symptoms have been submitted from their health care providers to be tested for possible swine flu.

Any samples identified as probable cases will be forwarded to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmation. If a possible case is identified the health care provider and families of the individual will be contacted for appropriate followup. Contacts will be identified and referred for appropriate evaluation. At this time, no swine flu cases have been confirmed in Alabama.

Swine influenza virus is a respiratory infection caused by influenza type A viruses that typically cause outbreaks of influenza in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can occur. Human cases typically involve people who have had direct contact with pigs, but person-to-person transmission is suspected among recent cases in the U.S. and Mexico.

"The best way to prevent spread is through following the basic rules of hygiene," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "If your child develops a fever and influenza-like symptoms, do not treat children and young people under age 18 with aspirin-containing products because of the risk of Reye syndrome."

Reye syndrome results in damage to the brain, kidneys and liver and can result in death within hours. The public is advised to follow these recommendations.

- 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 cleaners 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 seek health care and treatment.

The department has requested antivirals, masks and other medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile and is prepositioning them at locations throughout the state in the event they become necessary. These will be available to be dispensed when needed.

Swine influenza cannot be transmitted from eating pork or pork products. The symptoms of swine flu in people appear to be similar to the symptoms of regular human influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. As with seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Updates for the news media will be held on a regular basis. For updated information about swine flu, please visit [www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org).