



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Probable swine flu case identified in elementary school classmate in Madison FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces the fourth probable swine flu case in Alabama. This most recent case was a child who attended the same school as the first two children with probable swine flu cases at Heritage Elementary School in the City of Madison. The child is an outpatient who is doing well. The first probable case of the disease in a Montgomery County resident was announced Thursday.

On Thursday and Friday the health department clinical laboratories received more than 200 specimens from health care providers. Of the specimens processed to date, four probable cases have been forwarded to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmation. Because of the increased demand being placed on the health department, additional evaluation equipment is being purchased to increase capacity. The health department is working with the CDC to expedite the confirmation process. The health department laboratory is prioritizing specimens based on the symptoms of the patients.

To address the swine flu situation, a portion of the Strategic National Stockpile of antiviral drugs and supplies will be repositioned at regional locations in public health areas throughout the state.

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 seek health care and treatment.

The Alabama Department of Public Health does not recommend cancelling large group events based on concerns of swine flu. 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.

“Those with underlying medical conditions may want to avoid large group gatherings,” Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said. “We control our own individual risk of acquiring infection. If you are a parent, we encourage you to keep sick children home from school and other activities until they are well and to follow their doctors’ recommendations.”

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. 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 swine flu 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 swine flu.

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.

Eating pork or pork products does not lead to the transmission of swine influenza. 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 information about swine flu, please visit www.adph.org.