



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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

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## **Alabama has 13 probable or confirmed H1N1 (swine) flu cases**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces there currently 13 probable or confirmed H1N1 (swine) flu cases in Alabama which include four H1N1 flu cases which were confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There are eight probable or confirmed cases in Madison City Schools, one in a Madison County school, one in the University of Alabama at Huntsville Pre-School Learning Center and one in St. John the Baptist Catholic School (K-8). The two additional probable cases are from adults residing in Montgomery and Jefferson counties.

Closed until May 14 are City of Madison elementary schools, the Harvest Elementary School in the Madison County School System and St. John's School in Madison. The University of Alabama at Huntsville Pre-School Learning Center will be closed through May 8 and plans to reopen May 11.

The health department clinical laboratories has received more than 300 specimens from health care providers. 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 have been prepositioned 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. 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 swine flu in people are 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.

For information about swine flu, please visit [www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org).