



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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No swine flu cases identified in Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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All eight samples evaluated by the Alabama Department of Public Health's Bureau of Clinical Laboratories were found to be negative for swine flu. An additional 29 samples are currently being evaluated.

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.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "For example, a person who traveled to Mexico three weeks ago and who has not been ill should not be concerned about exposure from that location. More than half of confirmed U.S. cases have no exposure from travel to Mexico."

In preparation for possible pandemic flu, the Alabama Department of Public Health purchased 700,000 courses of antivirals and will receive additional courses and personal protective equipment this week. The department also has 1 million masks which will be distributed if needed.

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 follow-up. 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.

"The best way to prevent spread is through following the basic rules of hygiene," Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, reiterated. Day care centers, schools, homes and everyone in the population should 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.

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.