



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Residents encouraged to take precautions to prevent flu, other contagious illnesses

As novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection continues to be identified in communities all across Southeast Georgia, Public Health officials encourage residents to take the necessary precautions to prevent against the spread of this and other contagious illnesses.

“This has been expected because the novel H1N1 flu virus has been spreading all over the United States since April,” said Roger Naylor, Southeast Health District Public Information Officer. “We know it is in our communities. That’s why it is important for everyone to take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the flu, whether it is seasonal or novel H1N1.”

Previously referred to as “swine flu,” novel H1N1 is a new strain of flu virus that spreads mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu are similar to regular seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with novel H1N1 also experience runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

There are several important and simple ways to **prevent** the spread of these and other infectious illnesses:

- **Good hand washing** is absolutely critical and the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Alcohol-based

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Bacon  
Brantley

Bulloch  
Candler  
Charlton  
Clinch

Coffee  
Evans  
Jeff Davis  
Pierce

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Toombs  
Ware  
Wayne

hand sanitizers are also effective. Wash hands before eating, after going to the bathroom, and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

- Germs spread when we cough or sneeze. **Cover coughs and sneezes** with your elbows or a tissue. Always properly dispose of used tissues and **avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth**. Germs spread that way.
- It is recommended that all students be up-to-date on immunizations and that everyone get a **seasonal flu shot** when available in the coming weeks. Currently, companies are working to develop a novel H1N1 flu shot. However, it may be mid-October before it is available to the public.
- **If you or your child is sick and/or has a fever, please stay home and limit contact with others to keep from spreading the infection.** Those who are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine may return to work or school.

Your county health department is working closely with the local school systems and other community partners to monitor flu activity in this county.

The Southeast Health District and the health department will provide new information as it becomes available. For the most current information about novel H1N1 visit the Southeast Health District website at <http://www.sehdph.org/H1N1flu.htm> or the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).

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