

## Southeast Health District

"Keeping Communities Safe and Healthy"

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## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# H1N1 confirmed: Public Health, local schools work together to combat flu activity

The State Public Health Lab has confirmed two cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) in Clinch County, Public Health officials announced Monday. These are the first two confirmed cases in the county. Both are students. They have been treated and are recovering.

"This is not a surprise," said Beth Jones, Clinch County Health Department Nurse Manager. "It only confirms what we had already suspected."

But Jones reminds residents that not everyone who goes to the doctor or emergency room with flu-like symptoms will know if they have novel H1N1. Only those cases that are tested and sent to the State Public Health Lab can be confirmed for the new flu virus.

In the meantime, the Clinch County Health Department is working closely with the local school system and other community partners to monitor and respond to the current novel H1N1 activity in Clinch County.

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. 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.

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There are several important and simple ways to **prevent** the spread of novel H1N1 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 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 this fall.
- **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.

The Southeast Health District and the Clinch County 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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