

Southeast Health District

"Keeping Communities Safe and Healthy"

1101 Church Street • Waycross, Georgia 31501
Phone: 912-285-6002 • Fax: 912-284-2980
www.SEHDph.org



NEWS RELEASE

Rosemarie D. Parks, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For information, contact:
Roger Naylor; (912) 338-5232
rwnaylor@gdph.state.ga.us

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

As of Thursday, Aug. 20, there is one confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) in **Toombs** County, Public Health officials said.

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.

"We know it's in our community," said Roger Naylor, Southeast Health District Public Information Officer. "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."

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

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- 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 Toombs 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 Toombs 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 www.sehdph.org or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

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