



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2009

Hamilton County Sees First Case of influenza A (H1N1)

Chattanooga, TN- The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department has been notified of the first case of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus in Hamilton County. The individual, an adult male, is a Hamilton County resident and has received treatment and recovered from this illness. Although this individual has recently traveled out of the United States, the exact source of the infection is not known. Because this virus is widespread across the United States and internationally, it is impossible to determine the source of the illness.

“We anticipated that we would see the H1N1 virus in our community,” said Becky Barnes, Administrator at the Health Department. “In order to reduce the effects of this virus in our community, it is important to stay at home when sick and to practice good hygiene by washing our hands frequently. These everyday steps can help protect your health.”

Symptoms of influenza can include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, runny nose, tiredness, diarrhea, and vomiting. If symptoms are more severe, call or visit your health care provider to discuss if you need to be evaluated or treated. Antiviral drugs are available to treat persons with serious infections requiring hospitalization and persons at high risk for complications.

“Even though the H1N1 flu has been mild for most people, this flu virus is capable of causing life-threatening illness for all persons, even in the young and healthy. Particularly at risk are the elderly, the very young, pregnant women, or persons with other serious health conditions,” said Dr. Valerie Boaz, Health Officer at the Health Department. “We will continue to provide the latest information and guidance to our community to help slow the spread of the virus and to protect all our citizens.”

The Health Department recommends that all residents of Hamilton County take a shared responsibility to stay healthy with these everyday actions:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay at home if you have flu symptoms (fever with cough, sore throat) or go home if you begin to get sick. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you

stay at home at least seven days after you become ill, or at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away, whichever is longer.

The Health Department encourages residents to stay informed. To learn more, please visit the Health Department website at <http://health.hamiltontn.org/swineflu.aspx> or call 423-209-8190.

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