



**Michael L. Brackett, M.D., District Health Director**  
**John Darden, Director of District Program Managers**  
**Wyndia V. Wortham, Director of District Administration**  
**Susan Ayers, R.N., Director of Nursing & Clinical Services**  
**Rodney Hilley, District Environmental Health Manager**

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Georgia Department of Community Health ♦ Division of Public Health  
District 4 Health Services ♦ 122A Gordon Commercial ♦ LaGrange, Georgia 30240 ♦ 706.845.4035

March 30, 2010

Dear Parents:

H1N1 has been causing more disease recently in the Southeast, where several states report regional or local activity. Georgia is currently one of a handful of states — including Alabama and South Carolina — on a list compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with regional, or significant, influenza activity.

For the past several weeks, the Georgia Department of Community Health has reported an increase in flu-related hospitalizations. We don't have any evidence at this time that the virus has changed. Most of the hospitalizations that have been reviewed occurred in adults with underlying conditions that put them at higher risk of severe influenza.

The symptoms of novel H1N1 are similar to regular seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some infected people have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Most people who get it recover at home in approximately a week, the same as with seasonal flu.

People who develop severe illness should contact their local healthcare provider immediately. Most cases of novel H1N1 illness have been consistent with regular flu and should be treated similar to regular flu. **People who have underlying at-risk medical conditions who develop flu-like symptoms should seek medical advice.**

If you or your child have not been vaccinated against H1N1, I encourage you to do so. Vaccine is still available free of charge at county health departments and available at many pharmacies.

These are also everyday actions you and your children can take to stay healthy:

- **Do not send your child to school with a fever.** Keep children with flu-like illness at home so they don't infect others.
- Sick children should not return to school or participate in any activities putting them in contact with others until their fever has been gone **for at least 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze (using your sleeve is good). If you use a tissue to cover coughs or sneezes, throw it in the trash after you use it. Teach your children to do the same.

- Avoid giving children aspirin and products that contain aspirin. Aspirin use with a virus has been associated with a rare medical problem called Reyes Syndrome.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze and before you eat. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective if regular soap and water is not available. Be a good role model for your children.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

For more information about H1N1, contact your local county health department or go online to <http://health.state.ga.us/h1n1flu/>, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael L. Brackett, M.D." in a cursive style.

Michael L. Brackett, M.D.  
District Health Director