



Roll Up Your Sleeve – Prepare, Plan, and Stay Informed About the Flu

By Dr. Pat O'Neal, Director, Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response, Georgia Department of Community Health

Throughout September, designated National Preparedness Month, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is encouraging Georgians to take action and be prepared to slow the spread of the seasonal flu and novel influenza A (H1N1) viruses in their communities.

As cases of novel H1N1, or swine flu, continue to circulate in our communities this fall, it is important to prepare now for the affects that higher than normal absenteeism rates will have on our daily lives.

While the severity and symptoms of novel H1N1 flu are similar to the seasonal flu, we anticipate seeing an increase in the number of novel H1N1 flu cases because very few people have immunity to this virus. Combine those numbers with the Georgians that will be affected by the seasonal flu and you have a very busy flu season.

Rolling up your sleeve and arming yourself against the flu viruses is as simple as following these three key steps:

1. Prepare: Prepare for an increase in the number of individuals affected by the seasonal flu and novel H1N1 in schools and across businesses.
2. Plan: Plan what to do if you, your loved ones or co-workers get sick and have to stay home. Make contingency plans now for your home and work place needs in the event that you or your family members become ill.
3. Stay informed: Stay connected with a trusted source for up-to-date information on seasonal flu and novel H1N1.

We cannot stop an influenza pandemic, but we may limit spread of the disease through early detection and a well-planned response.

For more information visit, www.dch.georgia.gov/rollupyoursleeve or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/GADCH>.

###