



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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Southwest Health District launches toll-free Flu Hotline in English and Spanish

For Southwest Georgia residents, access to up-to-date information on Pandemic H1N1 Influenza, also known as Swine Flu, is only a phone call away – and the call is toll-free.

“By calling 1-800-829-2255, you will get current and credible information about influenza,” said Southwest Health District Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant. “Information ranges from symptoms of influenza to how to care from someone at home. The recording is approximately 10 minutes long. Listeners have the option to choose a Spanish version or to select more information on certain topics.”

The hotline can help individuals determine the best course of action to protect their health and the health of their families. It will be updated regularly to reflect changing conditions or new recommendations concerning influenza-like illnesses, Grant said.

“This resource isn’t intended to replace your healthcare provider. It is a way to help you make good choices,” she stressed. “Most people with H1N1 recover at home without medical attention, just as they do with regular seasonal flu. Unless they fall into a high risk group, the majority of those with influenza-like illness won’t need to see a doctor.”

Yet worried well and people with mild symptoms have flooded healthcare providers throughout the District since schools began opening and students began falling ill to the fast-spreading, highly-contagious new virus.

“Many of our partner healthcare agencies have reported crowds in their emergency departments and waiting rooms,” said Grant. “This is a concern because it stresses our healthcare system, can deplete limited resources and also exposes people in the waiting areas to H1N1.”

The Flu Hotline gives listeners information on how influenza spreads; ways to prevent it from spreading; symptoms; how to provide homecare to those with influenza-like illness; who is at risk of developing severe infections and what they should do if they develop symptoms or are exposed to someone with symptoms; and the warning signs that indicate immediate medical attention is needed.

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

In addition, Dougherty County's new 3-1-1 information line will refer callers with questions about influenza-like illness to the Flu Hotline and will post general flu information on its Web page, Grant said.

"As you can see, this is a real community effort," said Grant. "It offers benefits to everyone."

More information is available by calling local county health departments or by going online to www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org.

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