

Two swine flu cases suspected in Tennessee

Two students believed to have contracted virus

By JAMES CLARK
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tenn.)

With two possible cases of swine flu in Tennessee, local residents are being encouraged to be aware of flu-like symptoms and not report to work or school if you have them.

"If you're sick, don't try to be a hero and go to work," said Shelley Walker, a spokeswoman for the Tennessee Department of Health. "The same goes for your kids. If they're sick, keep them home."

Both Tennessee cases must be confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control to be officially listed as swine flu.

The first Tennessee case was reported Wednesday in Williamson County, and the second was reported yesterday in Shelby County. Both cases involve school children, neither of whom is reported to be seriously ill.

Much like the regular flu, swine flu affects people in different ways. Some may be bedridden for several days, while others are able to function at less than full speed.

"In most cases we've seen in America so far, most people are recovering at home without hospitalization," said Walker.

Swine flu has caused alarm because of the 168 deaths and more than 2,400 people reported sick in Mexico. And it is an unfamiliar virus that's striking outside of the normal flu season.

There is currently no swine flu vaccine, according to state medical epidemiologist Dr. Tim Jones.

"The vaccine given to people to protect them against the flu won't work against this," said Dr. Jones. "There are no vaccines right now and there won't be for several months."

River Park Hospital says it's taking the swine flu outbreak "very seriously" and adds the hospital is "proactively taking steps to recognize any potential victim of swine flu."

According to River Park officials, they are working with the Centers for Disease Control, as well as local and state health departments to closely monitor the swine flu situation.

In addition to CDC and health department protocols, the River Park staff has a plan in place for infectious outbreaks such as this.

"Our priority is to protect our patients and employees, and we are ready to respond quickly and appropriately if needed," said Dr. Randal Rampp, chief medical officer at River Park.



RAMPP

Continued on page 3-A