



INFLUENZA WATCH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County

Overall, respiratory activity remained relatively low during week 2; however, after a brief dip in week 1, the number of cases of both Influenza and RSV is once again increasing. To date, there have been no confirmed severe pediatric influenza cases. Emergency Department ILI (influenza-like illness) activity is currently slightly lower than rates experienced during 2007-08. The Department of Public Health has made its first laboratory identification of influenza this year. A 55 year old woman was confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory to have influenza type A (H1).

Table 1: Surveillance System Overview

| SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM* | Week 2 | 2008-2009 YTD |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| Percent Positive Influenza Tests± | 2.8 | 1.4 |
| Percent Positive RSV Tests‡ | 30.0 | 14.7 |
| Severe Pediatric Influenza Cases† | 0 | 0 |
| Respiratory Outbreaks | 1 | 3 |
| Influenza Vaccines Administered (PH) | -- | 57,736 |

*See <http://lapublichealth.org/acd/flu.htm> for a description of surveillance methods.

±Sentinel sites (9 participating facilities).

‡ Sentinel sites (4participating facilities).

†The number of deaths is indicated by the parenthesis.

California

During week 1 (January 4-January 10), influenza activity in California remained **sporadic**, with activity in Northern California higher than Southern California. Outpatient activity and hospitalizations for ILI remained low as did laboratory detections.

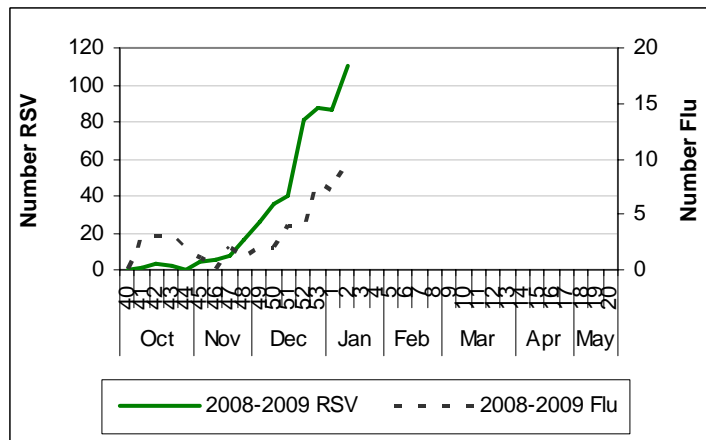
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/PROGRAMS/VRDL/Pages/CaliforniaInfluenzaSurveillanceProject.aspx>

United States

Influenza activity increased during week 1 (Jan. 4-Jan. 10) but remains low. During this week, 1 state reported **widespread** activity, 5 states reported **regional** activity, 10 reported **low** activity, 33 reported **sporadic** activity and 1 state reported no activity. Influenza activity is lower compared to the same week last year.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>

Figure 1: Positive Influenza and RSV Tests by Week



RSV data in Figure 1 represent testing completed in four reporting facilities for the 2008-2009 season. Influenza data represent testing completed in nine facilities.

In the News

Free Antibiotics: The Wrong Prescription for Cold and Flu Season

Several grocery store chains have recently begun offering free antibiotics (with prescription) at their pharmacies. Of particular concern is one store's attempt to link antibiotics with the cold and flu season. The Infectious Disease Society of America is concerned that these marketing efforts will encourage patients to ask for antibiotic prescriptions for viral conditions, like the common cold, for which antibiotics are completely ineffective. Additionally, IDSA believes that grocery stores would provide a better service to their customers by offering the influenza vaccine for free, as every year millions of unused doses are thrown away at the end of the season.

<http://www.idsociety.org/Content.aspx?id=13246>

Figure 2: Percent of ED Visits for ILI by Week

