

INFLUENZA WATCH

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Surveillance Week 39
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Flu Surveillance and Related Disease Updates for Los Angeles County

FLU IS HERE!

Local respiratory surveillance has begun to identify influenza in Los Angeles County. To date, respiratory disease activity has been low and typical for this time in the season; but influenza, parainfluenza, and adenovirus have all been detected. Because immunity from influenza vaccination can take up to 2 weeks, it is important to begin vaccinating now, before flu is prevalent. As demonstrated from the summary of last season's influenza-related deaths (see below), obesity continues to be a significant risk factor for serious consequences from influenza infection. Physicians should especially emphasize influenza vaccination of their overweight and obese patients, even if these patients are otherwise healthy. Nationwide, a record number of vaccine doses are expected this season (between 166-173 million doses), so there is no need to restrict or limit vaccination.

HIGHLIGHTS

LA County Influenza Season Summary (2010-2011)

- Overall, LA County experienced moderate, but fairly typical flu activity in 2010-2011, increasing and decreasing in a two-peak cycle; a mild peak just prior to January followed by a more substantial peak in February. Flu and other respiratory illnesses continued to circulate well into spring.
- Compared to nationwide, LA County saw significantly more type B influenza infections (43% locally, 26% US).
- Obesity continues to be a significant independent risk factor for serious consequences from flu; more than half 53% of all adult influenza-related fatalities in LA County had obesity as an underlying medical condition; 80% of all fatalities were either overweight or obese.
- As was also found during 2009 with the advent of pandemic H1N1, the ages of those affected by influenza have shifted younger than typical seasons. Last season, the vast majority of respiratory outbreaks were reported from elementary schools (84%, n=42). In addition, the median age among local influenza fatalities was 46.5 years (range 4-92 years).

For a full summary of

LA County's 2010-2011 influenza season, visit:

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/Flu/IWcurrent.pdf

Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths (September 2010 to August 2011)

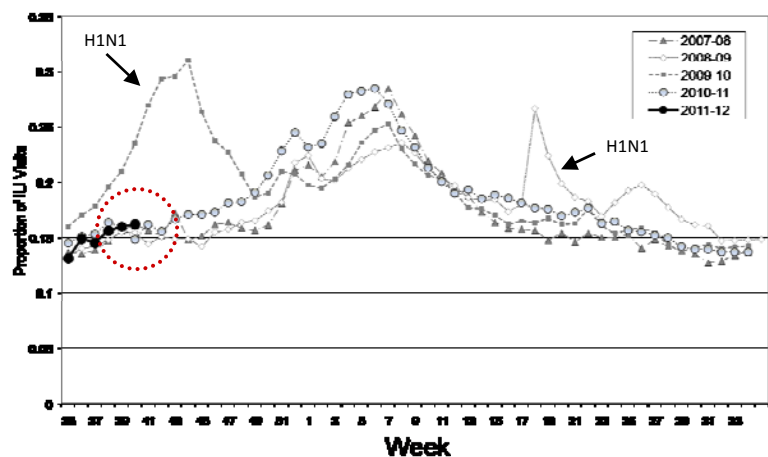
Since 2004, the CDC, along with local and state health departments, has conducted enhanced nationwide surveillance of influenza-related pediatric deaths. Last season, 115 pediatric fatalities were reported (5 from LA County). Of importance from these findings, nearly half of these fatalities (49%) occurred among children that had no known contributing high risk medical condition. In addition, even though national vaccination recommendations have urged influenza vaccination for all individuals 6 months of age and older, only 23% of the fatalities were fully vaccinated against influenza.

For full MMWR report

summarizing these findings visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/5ti5g85>

Figure 1
Influenza-like Illness ED Visits in LA County (2007-2012)
Surveillance Week 40



Local respiratory illness activity is slowly increasing, but levels are typical for this time in the season.

REPORT ALL CONFIRMED INFLUENZA-RELATED DEATHS

Local influenza reporting requirements differ slightly from the state and other jurisdictions. Since October 2010, LA County requires the reporting of confirmed influenza-related fatalities of **all** ages. These fatalities should be reported within 7 calendar days. Hospitalized and other severe cases not leading to death are not reportable. Physicians are also urged to identify influenza on death certificates if a person died as a direct or indirect consequence of infection with influenza.

LA County Department of Public Health's disease reporting information is available at:

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Cdrs.htm

