

FLU ACTIVITY DECLINING

Even though moderate levels of influenza activity continue in Los Angeles County, overall respiratory illness activity is declining: our emergency department surveillance for influenza-like activity has decreased since peaking at week 6 in early February (Figure 1) and overall testing for respiratory illness has substantially declined at our sentinel sites, yet the percent positive flu tests remains relatively high (see Table below). Positive tests for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) have slightly increased recently, but are still substantially lower since its peak levels that occurred at the beginning of the 2011. Of the 53 respiratory illness outbreaks reported to date, nearly all (92%) have been reported by schools, and among school reports, the majority (84%) have been from elementary schools.

LA County Surveillance Summary (2010-2011)
Surveillance Weeks 10 to 11

LA County Surveillance Summary	Week 10	Week 11	10-11 Season YTD
Positive Flu Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	120 / 859 (14.0%)	76 / 636 (11.9%)	1,972 / 16,671 (11.9%)
Percent Flu A / B	80 / 20	61 / 39	56 / 44
Positive RSV Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive RSV Tests)	33 / 284 (11.6%)	33 / 173 (19.1%)	1,398 / 6,531 (21.4%)
Respiratory Outbreaks	2	1	53
Flu Deaths, Confirmed (Pediatric Deaths, Confirmed)	2 (0)	0 (0)	19 (0)

Figure 1
Influenza-like Illness ED Visits in LA County (2007-2011)
Surveillance Week 11

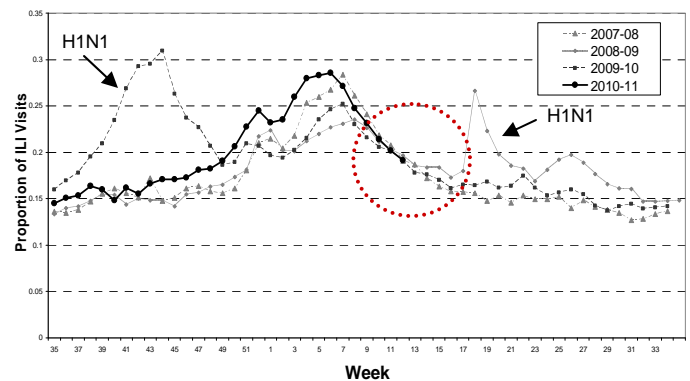
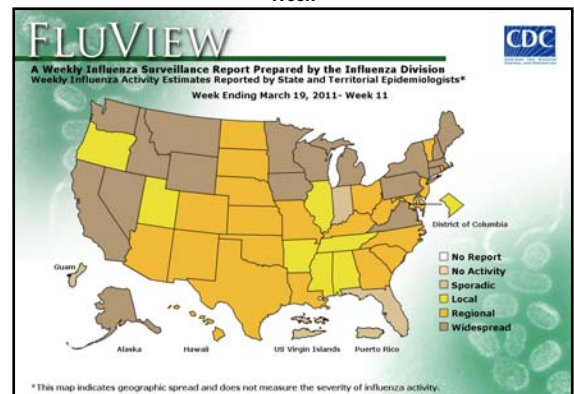
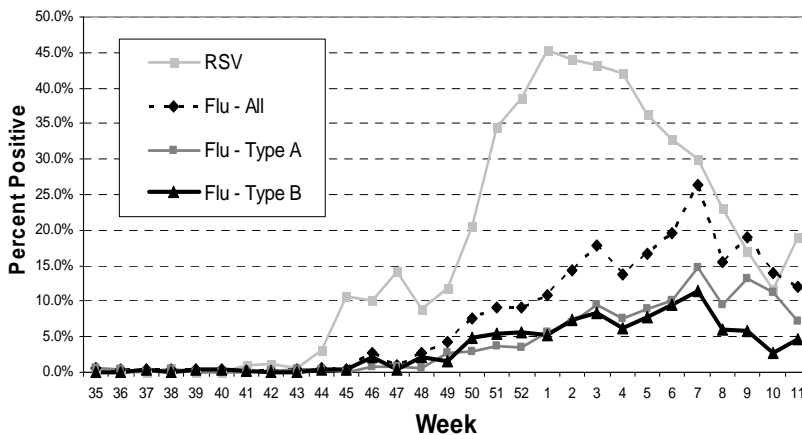


Figure 2
Percent Positive Influenza and RSV, LA County (2010-2011)
Surveillance Week 11



ANTIVIRALS STILL IMPORTANT FOR HIGH RISK PATIENTS

Even though influenza activity is diminishing in Los Angeles County, flu season has not ended and physicians should still consider influenza in their differential diagnosis and treat accordingly—especially for patients at high risk for complications from influenza infection including those with chronic health conditions (particularly heart and respiratory issues) and those significantly overweight or obese. Unfortunately, many physicians still incorrectly prescribe antibiotics to treat flu, a viral illness, when antivirals are indicated. This season, only two antivirals are recommended for the treatment and chemoprophylaxis of influenza: **oseltamivir** (Tamiflu®) and **zanamivir** (Relenza®). To date, assessments conducted by the CDC note that antiviral resistance has been minimal and these two medications continue to be effective against all viral strains circulating this season.

The CDC's antiviral recommendations for the 2010-2011 season, are available at:

www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm

The updated guidance for health care professionals on the use of rapid influenza diagnostic tests is available at:

www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/clinician_guidance_ridt.htm