

Influenza Activity Remains Low

During week 49 ending 12/11/15, influenza continued to circulate at low levels overall. Locally, less than 1% of all respiratory specimens collected to date have been positive for influenza (Table 1). Similar overall low levels also are occurring nationwide with only sporadic activity reported across most states (Figure 1). Because influenza typically peaks in January and February and can linger into the spring, vaccination is still highly recommended. More than 140 million doses of vaccine have been distributed throughout the US; there are no shortages and the CDC's virologic surveillance and characterization indicate that the current circulating influenza strains closely match those selected for this season's vaccine. Even during seasons like last year when the vaccine did not fully match the circulating strains, there are significant benefits from vaccination (Figure 2). Public Health urges everyone older than 6 months of age and without contraindications to be vaccinated annually.

	2015-2016		2014-2015	
	Week 49	YTD [†]	Week 49	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	13/1,042 (1.2%)	123/13,051 (0.9%)	51/848 (6.0%)	163/8,835 (1.8%)
Percent Flu A/B	77/23	83/17	84/16	77/23
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	4	2	2
Influenza Confirmed Outbreaks	0	0	0	0
Pediatric Flu Deaths [†]	0	0	0	0
Adult Flu Deaths	0	0	0	0

[†]The influenza surveillance year started August 30, 2015
^{††}Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILI symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death

Figure 1.

A Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report Prepared by the Influenza Division
Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported by State and Territorial Epidemiologists*
Week Ending December 12, 2015 - Week 49

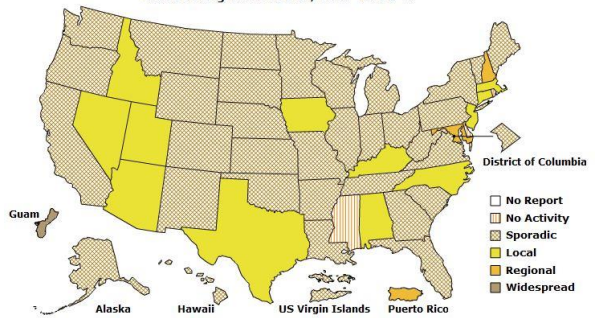


Figure 2.

the benefits of flu vaccination 2014-2015

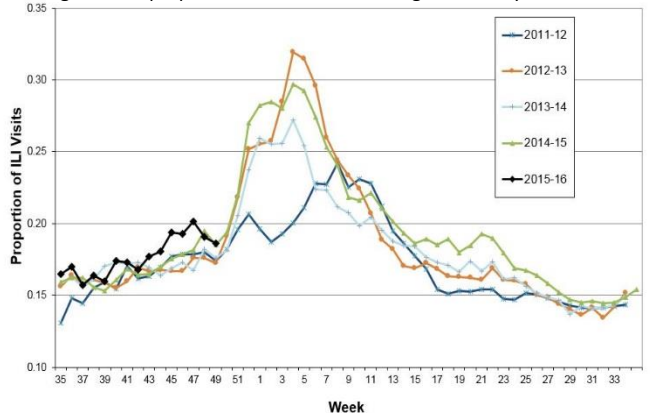
The estimated number of influenza-associated illnesses prevented by flu vaccination during the 2014-2015 season: **1.9 million**
greater than the population of the city of Philadelphia

The estimated number of flu-associated medical visits prevented by vaccination during the 2014-2015 season: **966,000**
as many people as can fit in Manhattan's Times Square

The estimated number of flu hospitalizations prevented during the 2014-2015 season: **67,000**
as many people as Seattle's Seahawks stadium can seat

get vaccinated
www.cdc.gov/flu

Figure 3. ILI proportion of ED Visits, Los Angeles County 2011-2016



Influenza Vaccine is Protective Against Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza in Obese Children

During the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, obesity emerged as a novel risk factor for severe disease. In [Los Angeles County \(LAC\) for the past six seasons, about half \(49%, range 27%–86%\) of all reported influenza fatalities were classified as either overweight or obese](#). Because studies have suggested that obesity is associated with an ineffective response to influenza vaccine, a [recent study](#) examined whether vaccination was protective among obese children. Surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) was conducted in eight elementary schools in LAC during the 2010–2011 influenza season. Polymerase-chain reaction (PCR) was performed on combined nose/throat swabs collected from children with ILI at presentation to the school nurse or during absenteeism. Of 4,260 children with height/weight data, 1,191 (28.0%) were obese (BMI >=95th percentile). Respiratory specimens were obtained from 858 (20.1%) children. Unvaccinated obese compared with vaccinated obese children acquired three times more PCR-confirmed influenza (62 vs. 17 per 1000 children, p=0.003) and missed more school days (4.6 vs. 3.2 per 100 school days, p<0.001) during influenza season. This study demonstrates that influenza vaccination is protective. The LAC Department of Public Health urges all overweight and obese individuals to get vaccinated even if no other risk factors for severe disease are present.

Overweight?

Extra Weight = Extra Risk for Flu Complications



Are you overweight? Hoping to lose weight?

Did you know that being overweight or obese increases your chance of serious complications from the flu?

In the 2010-11 flu season, 80% of adults in LA that died from flu-related complications were overweight or obese. Don't be a statistic.

Make flu vaccination your first step to good health. Get vaccinated!

If you don't have a regular health care provider, call 2-1-1 or visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov to find free or low-cost vaccination sites.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 11/20/15
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov 311-7406