

Influenza Activity Increasing, Though Low Overall

Both locally and nationally, influenza activity is showing continued moderate increases, but remains low overall. In Los Angeles County, the reported percent positive influenza test from our sentinel sites has increased with roughly 17% of tests positive for influenza during week 5, yet this level is lower than this time last year when 24% of tests were positive (Table 1). Similarly, while this time last year 36 influenza-associated deaths were identified, this year only 7 deaths have been identified to date. In addition, this season a much greater proportion of type B influenza has been circulating as compared to last season; currently, 40% of all positive influenza tests from our sentinel sites have been type B, while only 7% were type B last year.

These local findings are similar to national reports for influenza activity; only moderate increases are occurring across most states, with low overall levels of activity. Viral subtyping conducted by the CDC continues to identify relatively high levels of type B influenza with 27% of national influenza samples testing positive for B during week 5. Among type A isolates that have been subtyped during week 5, 86% were the pandemic H1N1 2009 strain. This year's vaccine continues to closely match the current circulating viral strains and should provide good protection against disease. Because influenza can circulate into spring, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to urge vaccination for those who have not been vaccinated yet against influenza.

	2015-2016		2014-2015	
	Week 5*	YTD†	Week 5	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	337/2,025 (16.6%)	1,523/26,345 (5.8%)	608/2,536 (24.0%)	4,086/27,304 (15.0%)
Percent Flu A/B	56/44	60/40	92/8	93/7
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	4	7	30
Influenza Confirmed Outbreaks	0	0	3	16
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡	0	0	0	1
Adult Flu Deaths	0	7	5	36

*For the 2015-2016 season, week 5 extends from 1/31/16 to 2/6/16
†The influenza surveillance year started August 30, 2015.
‡Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILL symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death

