

## Influenza Levels Elevated

Influenza currently is circulating in LA County at increased levels and high rates of disease are occurring earlier this year compared with last year. In the second week of 2017, about 1 in 5 laboratory tests from people with respiratory illness at sentinel clinics were positive for influenza (Table 1, Figure 1). A greater proportion of influenza infections this year have been identified as type A—97% this season compared with 62% at the same time last year, and of strains tested, the large majority have been influenza A H3N2. Seasons where influenza A H3N2 predominates are typically more severe than A H1N1 or B seasons and also are more likely to affect the elderly. This is reflected by a recent increase in reported respiratory illness outbreaks at skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. During the current influenza season in LA County, 17 outbreaks have been reported from these facilities, whereas 19 total outbreaks were confirmed from these facilities for the full previous season. In response to an increase in outbreaks identified statewide, the California Department of Public Health has issued [an advisory](#) for long-term care facilities including guidance for influenza prevention and outbreak management. LAC DPH also has [guidelines](#) available to assist with influenza outbreak prevention and control at skilled nursing facilities.

While data are not yet available to determine this season’s vaccine effectiveness, the circulating influenza strains are a good match to those included in the vaccine. It is not too late to be vaccinated but the time is now given that it may take up to 2-weeks to develop immunity. Good hand hygiene and cough etiquette are important as well as staying away from others if you are sick. Those at high risk for complications from influenza who present with influenza-like illness should be considered for antiviral treatment which may reduce duration of symptoms, severity, and contagiousness. Antiviral treatment should not be delayed while waiting for laboratory confirmation of influenza.

Figure 1. Influenza Percent Positive by MMWR Week, 2012-2017

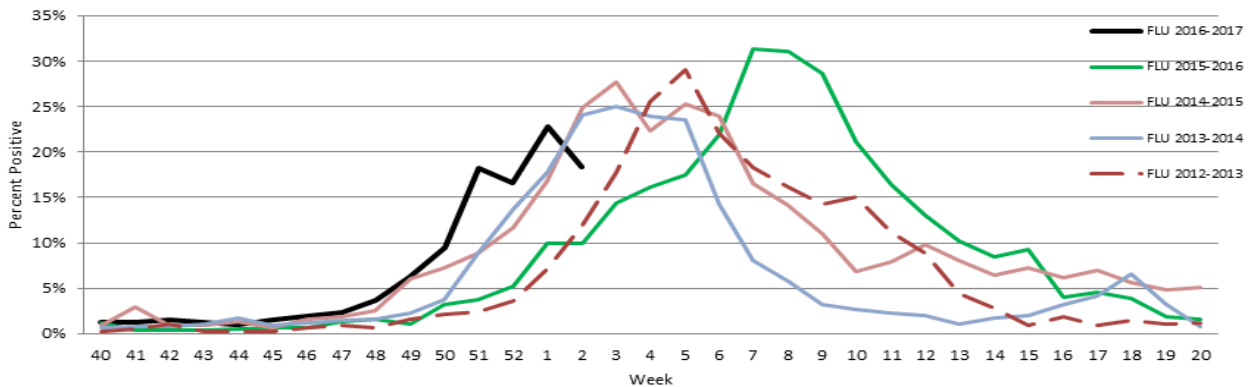


Table 1. Los Angeles County Influenza Surveillance Summary

	2016-2017		2015-2016	
	Week 2*	YTD <sup>†</sup>	Week 2	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	470/2,561 (18.4%)	2433/27,142 (9.0%)	162/1,636 (9.8%)	618/20920 (2.9%)
Percent Flu A/B	97/3	98/2	51/49	76/24
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡	0	0	0	0
Adult Flu Deaths	1	8	2	7

\*For the 2016-2017 season, week 2 extends from 1/8/2017 to 1/14/2017.

†The influenza surveillance year started August 28, 2016.

‡Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILL symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death.

Figure 2. US Influenza Activity Estimates

