



SPECIAL ISSUE INFLUENZA AND SCHOOLS

Respiratory illness outbreaks at schools continue to significantly impact the residents of Los Angeles County (LAC). Even though last year's influenza season was relatively mild, LAC Department of Public Health investigated 22 confirmed respiratory virus outbreaks in community settings. Of these, 20 (90.9%) were associated with schools or daycares; only 2 (9.1%) were at an assisted or residential living facility. During the previous season, 2010-2011, a similarly high percentage of confirmed community setting respiratory outbreaks were identified at schools (48 of 50 outbreaks, 96%).

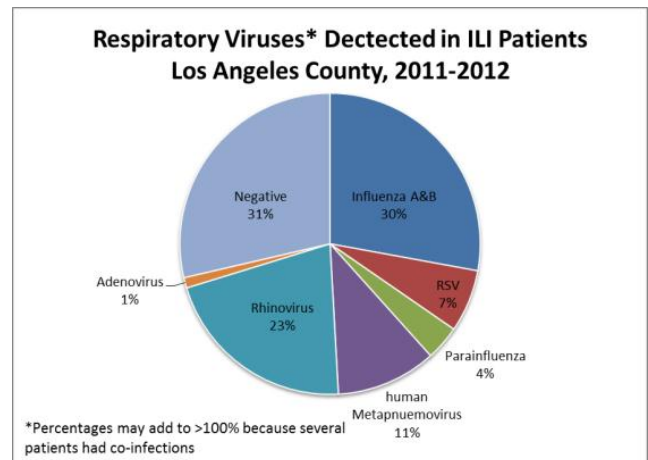
Last season, 2011-2012, on average, about 12 cases were associated with each outbreak and the average length of these outbreaks stretched for more than 8 days. Of important note was the delay in reporting these outbreaks to Public Health; on average, these outbreaks were not reported until over 7 days after the onset of the first case. Delay in reporting outbreaks can impede our ability to identify the true pathogen causing illness and also hinder our ability to help prevent the spread of disease. With this in mind, we urge schools to rapidly report illness clusters to Public Health to help improve our identification and prevention of disease. A respiratory illness cluster is 5 cases of new onset respiratory disease in one week and in a linked group such as a single classroom, sports team or after-school program.

**Questions about reporting a respiratory illness outbreak?
Call Acute Communicable Disease Control (213) 240-7941**

Free Resources for Schools!

Public Health has many resources available for schools and communities.

Visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/HealthEd.htm>



Not all snot is flu!

LAC Public Health monitors many respiratory viruses besides flu; these can feel very similar to flu, but are not flu. As shown above, in our study of patients with influenza-like illness (ILI), roughly one-third of the respiratory viruses identified last season were influenza. Because influenza can be prevented by vaccination, this shows that vaccination can reduce a large portion of the respiratory illnesses occurring in our communities.

Online Preparedness Training Program for Schools and Communities

www.laschoolhealth.com

This interactive website contains quick, fun and easy classes and videos developed specifically for schools. Classes include information for the prevention of flu and MRSA on campuses.

EVERYONE NEEDS FLU VACCINATION!

Sadly, influenza can impact everyone; even healthy people can die from flu. During the 2010-11 season, 115 children in the US died from flu; of these about half (49%) had no known risk factor for serious consequences from flu.

Need to find a flu shot?

Visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/flu/FluLocatorMain.htm>