

Influenza Widespread and Elevated in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County (LAC) is currently seeing very high levels of influenza (flu) activity. During surveillance week 52 ending on December 30th, 37.5% of respiratory specimens tested in our sentinel surveillance laboratories were positive for influenza (Table 1). According to the CDC, the predominant strain of flu circulating is [influenza A H3N2](#). Seasons in which A(H3N2) viruses predominate are associated with more hospitalizations and death in persons aged >65 years compared with other age groups. As of the end of surveillance week 52, LAC Department of Public Health (DPH) has received a total of 26 confirmed reports of influenza-associated deaths since the start of the 2017-18 season. The mean age of these deaths is 76 years (range: 46-100 years). In response to the increase local flu activity, LAC DPH released a [Health Alert](#) with guidance on treatment.

Because of the current high flu activity in LAC, some skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) have expressed concern about the supply of Tamiflu® (Oseltamivir) in their facilities. There is currently no shortage of Tamiflu. However, facilities should be aware that in the event of an flu or unknown respiratory outbreak within their facility, we [recommend that all residents](#) (both ill and well) be provided with antivirals. Facilities should have a plan for acquiring additional antiviral doses if necessary, especially if the outbreak occurs on a weekend or holiday. LAC DPH has [resources for infection prevention at SNFs](#) including [guidance for influenza outbreaks](#).

Table 1. Los Angeles County Influenza Surveillance Summary

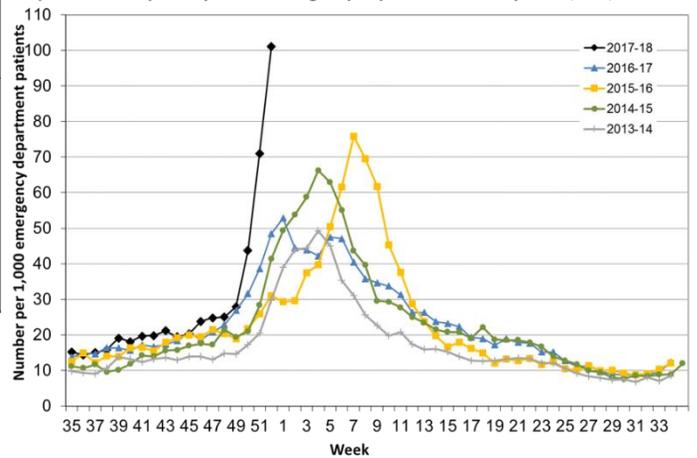
	2017-2018		2016-2017	
	Week 52*	YTD†	Week 52	YTD
Percent Positive Flu Tests	37.5	13.9	16.6	5.9
Percent Flu A/B	87/13	85/15	99/1	97/3
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡		0		0
Adult Flu Deaths		26		5

*For the 2017-2018 season, week 52 starts 12/24/2017 and ends 12/30/2017.

†The influenza surveillance year started August 27, 2017.

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

Proportion of Respiratory Illness Emergency Department Visits by Week, LAC, 2013-2018



% Respiratory specimen positive for influenza, 2008-2017

