

INFLUENZA WATCH

Influenza and Related Disease Updates for Los Angeles County

Influenza Levels are Up

All local surveillance indicators for influenza activity show increased levels in Los Angeles County (LAC). For the seventh week in a row the percent of positive flu tests from sentinel laboratories has increased (Figure 1). One additional flu death was reported and confirmed during surveillance week 1 bringing the total number of influenza-associated deaths to six for this season (Table 1). No pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported in LAC. Visits to emergency departments for influenza-like-illness (ILI) symptoms also continue to increase (Figure 2). Despite national reports of high activity, local flu activity is comparable to last year's rates (Table 1 and Figure 1). It is uncertain if flu activity has peaked yet. Last season in LAC, influenza activity peaked in the last week of January/first week of February, however each season is different. Nationwide, widespread activity has been reported in most states and influenza A H3N2 continues to be the dominant strain. Approximately two-thirds of the viruses tested at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been different from the H3N2 vaccine virus which may result in reduced vaccine effectiveness; however vaccination is still recommended and may offer protection against other strains of virus, such as influenza B, which often appears late in the season. Antiviral medications should be considered for treatment of influenza as an adjunct to vaccination. The latest update on antiviral medications from the CDC can be found here: [LAHAN](#)

Table 1. LA County Surveillance Summary

	2014-2015		2013-2014	
	Week 1	YTD [†]	Week 1	YTD
Percent Positive Flu Tests	24.8%	8.5%	24.1%	7.8%
Percent Flu A/B	96/4	93/7	99/1	98/2
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	2	0	3
Pediatric Flu Deaths [†]	0	0	0	1
Adult Flu Deaths	1	6	2	10

[†]The influenza surveillance year starts September 1

^{††}Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILI symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death

Figure 2. Percent Positive Visits to Emergency Departments for ILI, LAC 2009-2015

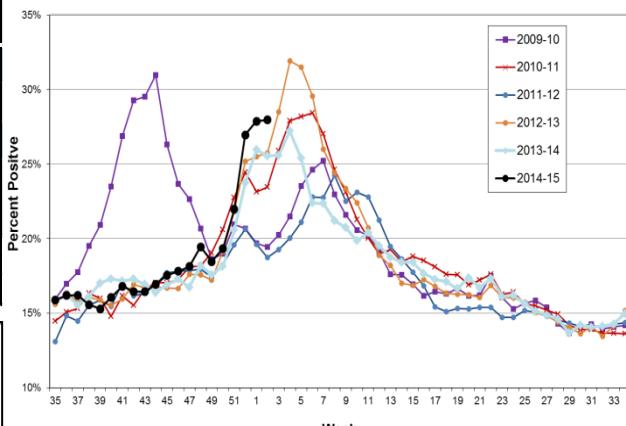
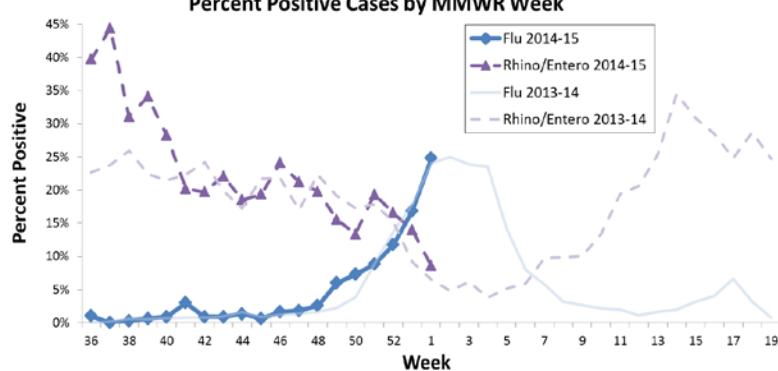


Figure 1. Influenza and Rhino/Enteroviruses, LAC 2013-2015
Percent Positive Cases by MMWR Week



Early Vaccine Efficacy Estimates

This week the CDC released early estimates of this season's vaccine effectiveness. Overall effectiveness was 23% which is low compared to previous seasons and likely due to the predominance of different H3N2 viruses not included in the vaccine. Read the full report here: [Early Estimates of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness — United States, January 2015](#)

Severe RSV in Children < 5 Reportable

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can cause both upper and lower respiratory infections and is the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children younger than 1. The CDC estimates that each year RSV causes over 50,000 hospitalizations in children younger than 5*. As of December 1, 2014, cases of severe RSV in children less than 5 years old are now reportable in LAC. Severe RSV disease is defined as children who died or were admitted to the ICU with a laboratory confirmed RSV infection. More information can be found here: [RSV Reporting](#)

*[RSV | Home | Respiratory Syncytial Virus | CDC](#)