

Influenza Activity Remains Low

Local surveillance indicators show influenza activity in Los Angeles County (LAC) remaining at low levels. The percent of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in sentinel laboratories was below 1% (Figure 1). Currently percent positive rates of influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are overlapping at marginal levels. Rhinovirus and enteroviruses, which cause common cold symptoms, are measuring at seasonally higher levels, highlighting that other respiratory pathogens aside from influenza are causing illness in our communities. Low levels of both influenza-like-illness visits to emergency departments and number of respiratory outbreaks in community settings all indicate minimal influenza activity so far for this season. For those that haven't yet received an influenza vaccine, now is the time to do so before influenza levels pick up and the virus begins to widely circulate as immunity can take up to 2 weeks to develop.

The rest of California and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nationwide reports also reflect low influenza activity with most states reporting only sporadic activity (Figure 2). Influenza A (H3) continues to be the predominant strain along with lower levels of A (H1N1) and influenza B also detected. Antigenic testing of select specimens at the CDC show the influenza vaccine components in this season's vaccine are a good match to circulating lineages.

Figure 1. Influenza, Rhino/Enteroviruses, and RSV Percent Positive of Respiratory Viral Tests from Sentinel Sites by MMWR Week, LAC, 2013-2016

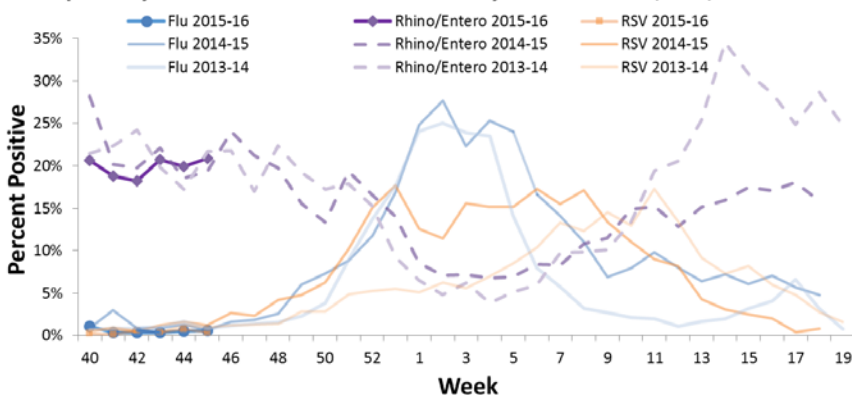
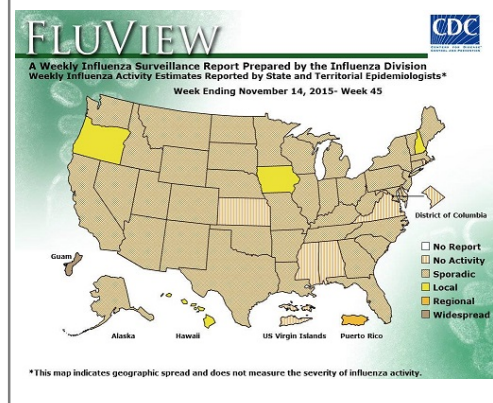


Figure 2. U.S. Geographic Spread of Influenza



Flu Near You Uses Crowd Sourced Data to Track Flu Activity

Flu Near You is a relatively new surveillance system that measures flu activity based on real-time voluntary participant reports. Users are grouped geographically so flu activity can be viewed from the community level, all the way to a national scale. Symptoms are reported on a weekly basis online. To participate in Flu Near You or to view their flu map, see:

[Flu Near You](#)

Children with Neurologic Conditions are at Higher Risk for Flu Complications

Children of any age with neurologic conditions such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, developmental delay, or epilepsy are more likely to develop severe consequences from influenza. Complications may include pneumonia or even death. Some children with these conditions may have trouble with muscle or lung function which can interfere with the ability to cough, swallow, or clear fluids from their airways which can make flu symptoms worse. Previous studies have shown that children with neurological disorders had a longer duration of illness and were more likely to die in the hospital compared to children without underlying medical conditions¹. Vaccination is the best protection against getting the flu for children with neurologic conditions and everyone 6 months of age and older. Antiviral treatment may be helpful and works best when administered as soon as possible. For more information see:

[Flu and Children with Neurologic Conditions | Seasonal Influenza \(Flu\) | CDC](#)

¹[Neurologic Disorders Among Pediatric Deaths Associated With the 2009 Pandemic Influenza | Articles | Pediatrics](#)