

Influenza Levels Remain Elevated

Influenza continues to circulate at increased levels in Los Angeles County. Currently, approximately 1 in 5 laboratory tests have been positive for influenza among those with influenza-like illness (ILI) presenting at our sentinel clinic sites (Table 1), and this elevated level of activity has persisted since the first week of January (Figure 2).

Nationwide, nearly all US states reported widespread influenza activity during week 4 (Figure 1). Throughout this season, a significantly greater proportion of type A has been identified both locally and nationwide, and among the strains tested, [H3N2 predominates](#). Seasons with high levels of influenza A H3N2 tend to be more severe than A H1N1 or B seasons and are more likely to affect older adults. LAC DPH continues to recommend antiviral treatment and prophylaxis for those at high risk for complications from influenza [as described by the CDC](#), especially for those who are immunocompromised or have chronic health conditions. Treatment should not be delayed while waiting for laboratory confirmation of influenza. Because treatment is most effective when provided within the first 48 hours of illness, people at high risk should see their physician as soon as possible when experiencing influenza-like symptoms.

LAC DPH urges everyone to take steps to limit the spread of influenza including staying home when ill and practicing healthy habits such as washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes. While older adults are most likely to experience severe consequences from influenza, studies show children are most likely to spread infection. Therefore, keeping sick children home and out of schools and daycare can help to prevent the spread of disease in our communities.

Table 1. Los Angeles County Influenza Surveillance Summary

	2016-2017		2015-2016	
	Week 4*	YTD†	Week 4	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/ Total Tests (% Positive)	328/1,800 (18.2%)	3,456/33,508 (10.3%)	306/1,894 (16.2%)	1,182/24641 (4.8%)
Percent Flu A/B	98/2	98/2	60/40	60/40
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡	0	0	0	0
Adult Flu Deaths‡	0	27	2	10

*For the 2016-2017 season, week 4 extends from 1/22/2017 to 1/28/2017.

†The influenza surveillance year started August 28, 2016.

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

Figure 1. US Influenza Activity Estimate Week 4



Figure 2. Influenza Percent Positive by MMWR Week Los Angeles County 2012-2017

