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WEEKLY FLU NEWS

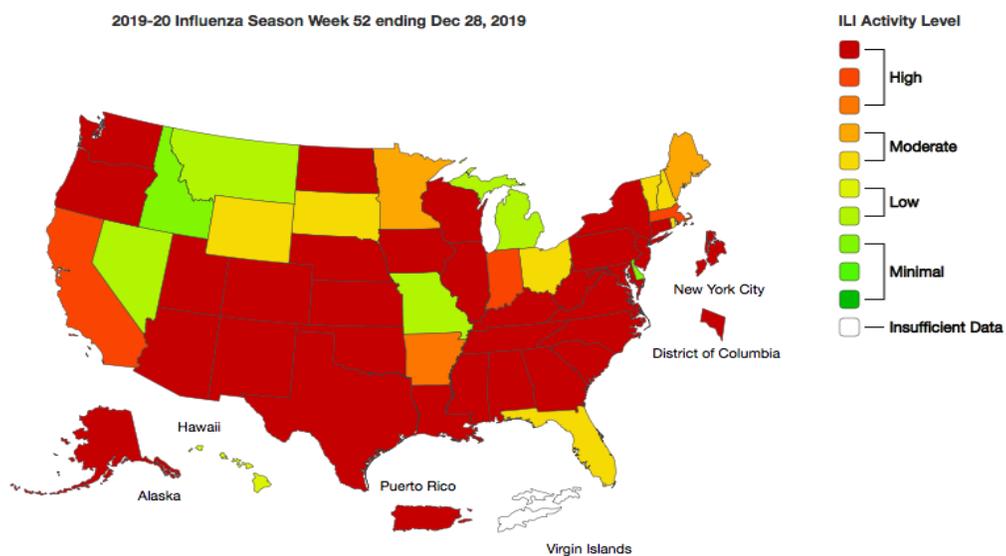
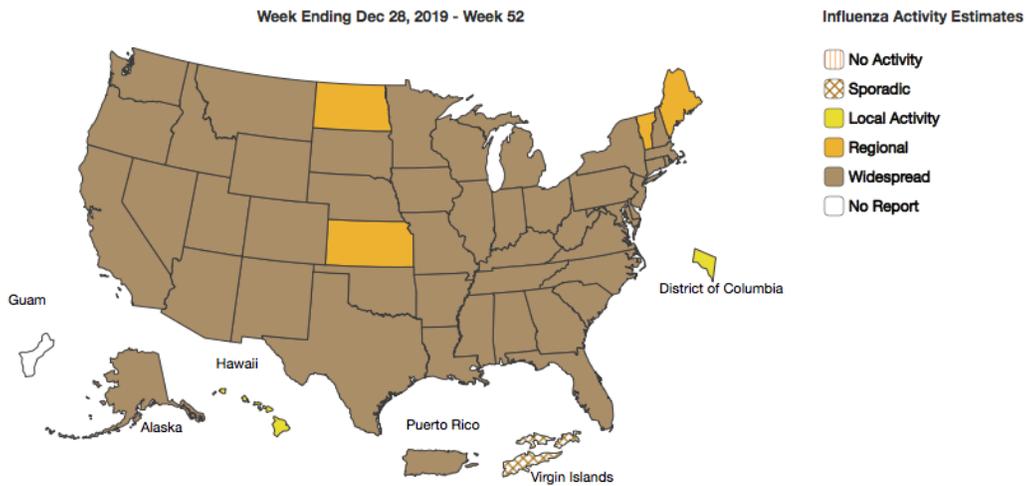
January 6, 2020



CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 52, Ending Dec. 28, 2019

Jan. 3, 2020; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Seasonal flu activity in the United States is high and continues to increase. Flu activity has been elevated for eight weeks.
- 26.3% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza.
- Nationally, influenza B/Victoria viruses are most common followed by H1N1. Predominant viruses vary by region and age group. There is low circulation of H3N2 and B/Yamagata viruses.
- 6.9% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness. All 10 regions were above their baselines and continuing to increase.
- The overall hospitalization rate is 9.2 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 5.5% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold.
- Five new pediatric flu deaths were reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 52. The total for the season is 27.



2019-2020 U.S. Flu Season: Preliminary Burden Estimates

Jan. 3, 2020, [CDC](#)

CDC estimates that, from October 1, 2019, through December 28, 2019, there have been:

- 6.4 million - 9.1 million flu illnesses
- 3.0 - 4.4 million flu medical visits
- 55,000 - 93,000 flu hospitalizations
- 2,900 - 7,200 flu deaths

US on track for one of the worst flu seasons in decades



Jan. 3, 2020; CNN

This flu season is shaping up to be one of the worst in decades, according to the United States' top infectious disease doctor.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, said while it's impossible to predict how the flu will play out, the season so far is on track to be as severe as the 2017-2018 flu season, which was the deadliest in more than four decades, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The initial indicators indicate this is not going to be a good season -- this is going to be a bad season," Fauci said.



Use of peer comparison, provider education, and electronic medical record triggers to increase influenza vaccination rates in hospitalized children

Jan. 2, 2020; AAP

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends annual influenza vaccination for all children 6 months and older, yet only 59% of children nationally received the vaccine during the 2014–2016 influenza seasons. Of these, only 4% received the vaccine in a hospital setting. The goal of this quality improvement (QI) initiative was to increase influenza vaccination status at discharge at least twofold in children admitted to our hospital during the 2017–2018 influenza season compared with the 2016–2017 season.



Injecting the flu vaccine into a tumor gets the immune system to attack it

Dec. 30, 2019; arsTECHNICA

A number of years back, there was a great deal of excitement about using viruses to target cancer. A number of viruses explode the cells that they've infected in order to spread to new ones. Engineering those viruses so that they could only grow in cancer cells would seem to provide a way of selectively killing these cells. And some preliminary tests were promising, showing massive tumors nearly disappearing.

But the results were inconsistent, and there were complications. The immune system would respond to the virus, limiting our ability to use it more than once. And some of the tumor killing seemed to be the result of the immune system, rather than the virus.

Now, some researchers have focused on the immune response, inducing it at the site of the tumor. And they do so by a remarkably simple method: injecting the tumor with the flu vaccine. As a bonus, the mice it was tested on were successfully immunized, too.



Influenza A vs. B: What to know

Jan. 2, 2020; [MedicalNewsToday](#)

There are four types of influenza virus. Influenza A is the most common, followed by influenza B. Both are highly contagious, and their symptoms are similar.

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral respiratory illness that is most prevalent during fall and winter months. These viruses can spread when a person with the infection sneezes or coughs and droplets travel to another person's nose or mouth.

The flu is different from the common cold. It can cause severe illness and worsen some chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, and diabetes. In some cases, it can lead to death.



Last year, he was in a coma. This year he got a flu shot

Jan. 2, 2020; [HeraldNet](#)

It's not only medical experts and proactive HR folks urging people to get flu shots.

Mattress-seller Stewart Patey has joined the ranks.

The 58-year-old Marysville man said he nearly died from complications of the flu last season.

“It went from flu to pneumonia to sepsis to ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome),” Patey said. “They put me in a drug-induced coma on March 13. I woke up on May 17.”

Patey never bothered with flu shots before.



Influenza B virus causing 72% of pediatric fatalities in 2019-2020

Dec. 30, 2019; [PrecisionVaccinations](#)

According to the new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) FluView report, there have been 16 pediatric fatalities associated with influenza B viruses during the 2019-2020 flu season.

Published on December 27, 2019, this FluView report confirmed 5 of these 16 fatalities had the lineage determined and all were B/Victoria viruses.

Additionally, 6 child deaths were associated with influenza A viruses. Four of these were related to A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses.



Doctors say springtime influenza B viruses arriving earlier than expected

Jan. 3, 2020; [Newsday](#)

The flu season is moving toward its peak, with a twist that has researchers scratching their heads.

The influenza B/Victoria viruses that usually appear in early spring are currently the dominant strains across the country. Some experts say the B viruses impact children more than adults and are often mistakenly viewed as less serious than A (H1N1) viruses.

“Everyone is flummoxed by the B viruses causing large outbreaks,” said Dr. William Schaffner, medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “Usually, they keep going when the A viruses recede.

“Kids are a great engine for the spread of influenza, and B seems to like kids,” he added. “So I would emphasize even more that everyone six months and older, including children, should get vaccinated. It’s not too late.”



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