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WEEKLY FLU NEWS

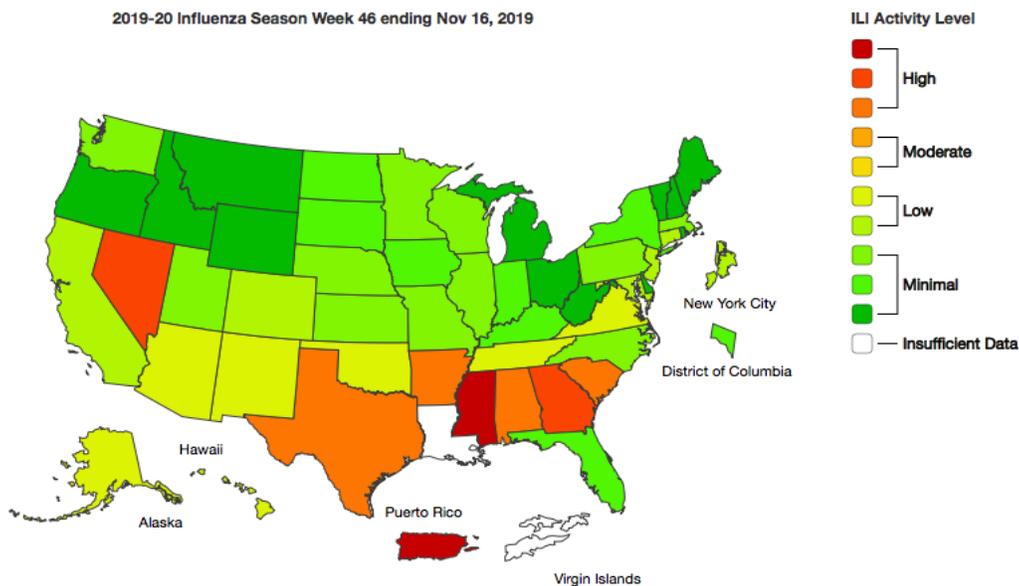
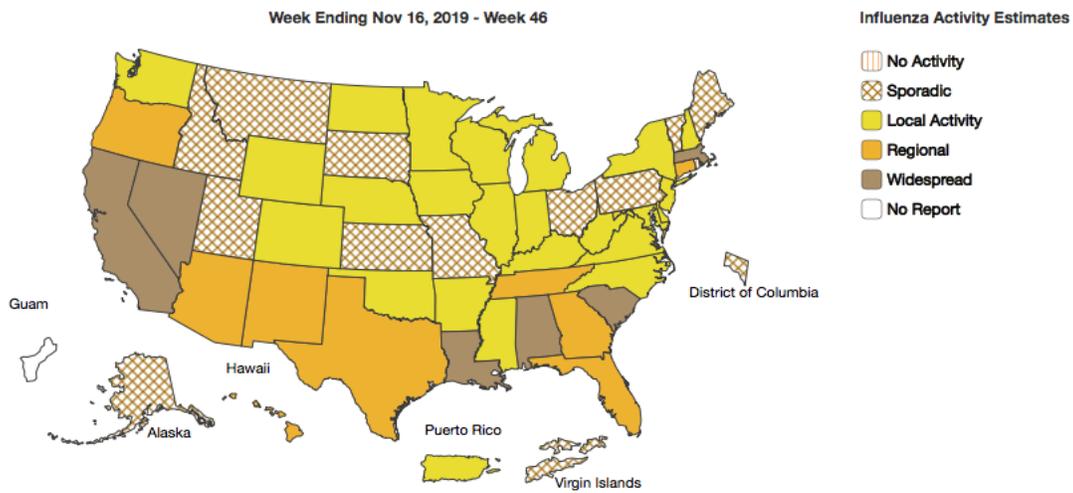
November 25, 2019



CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 46, Ending Nov. 16, 2019

Nov. 22, 2019; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Seasonal flu activity in the United States continues to increase, but the amount of activity and the predominant influenza viruses vary by region.
- 7.3% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza.
- Nationally, influenza B/Victoria viruses are most common followed by H1N1 and H3N2. Predominant viruses vary by region and age group.
- 2.5% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness, which is above the national baseline of 2.4%. Four of 10 regions were at or above their baselines.
- Overall hospitalization rate is 1.4 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 5.2% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 6.2%.
- One new pediatric flu death was reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 45. The total for the season is 4.



Excess weight can weaken the flu shot

Nov. 24, 2019, [NPR](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says flu season is starting to ramp up — and it's not too late to reduce your risk with a vaccine.

But scientists have come to realize that flu vaccines are less effective for people who are overweight or obese. Considering that excess weight affects more than two-thirds of the U.S. adult population, that's a significant shortcoming.

Researchers are studying why that's the case, with an eye toward developing better flu vaccines.

Flu season is picking up, particularly in the South and the West, CDC says



Nov. 22, 2019; [NBC News](#)

Flu activity is picking up across the country, indicating an earlier start to this year's flu season, particularly in the South and in the West, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The uptick doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be a bad season — flu is notoriously unpredictable — but some clues from earlier this year point to a potentially harsh season. The flu season in Australia, which can be a sign of what's to come in the Northern Hemisphere, arrived early and with a vengeance.

Friday, the CDC reported widespread flu in five states: Alabama, California, Louisiana, Nevada and South Carolina. This time last year, no states showed widespread activity.



Efforts to move the needle on flu shot rates get stuck

Nov. 21, 2019; [Kaiser Health News](#)

It's free and available everywhere. Yet most Americans skip the annual flu shot — with the number of dispensed vaccines barely changed in the past decade, despite government removal of cost and access obstacles.

“We are kind of spinning our wheels trying to reach a larger portion of the population,” said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious-disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., and medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.

Public health officials recommend that nearly all people get the flu shot.

The 2010 Affordable Care Act required all insurers to waive out-of-pocket costs for plan members for the vaccinations and, in the past few years, all states allowed pharmacists to administer the shots, which have made them available in drugstores, grocery chains and big-box stores.



Susceptibility of influenza A, B, C, and D viruses to baloxavir

Nov. 25, 2019; [Medscape](#)

Baloxavir showed broad-spectrum in vitro replication inhibition of 4 types of influenza viruses (90% effective concentration range 1.2–98.3 nmol/L); susceptibility pattern was influenza A > B > C > D. This drug also inhibited influenza A viruses of avian and swine origin, including viruses that have pandemic potential and those resistant to neuraminidase inhibitors.



Patients with asthma can benefit from getting the flu vaccine

Nov. 22, 2019; [ContagionLive](#)

Over a period of 6 influenza virus seasons, the seasonal flu vaccine provided meaningful protection for asthma patients, according to the results of a study published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

Investigators from the University of Edinburgh examined patient data from 223 primary care practices in Scotland in order to estimate the effectiveness of the flu vaccine in adults and children with asthma. The patients, including children older than 6 months of age, were seen from the 2010-11 flu season to the 2015-16 season.

The study authors explained that having the flu is a trigger for asthma attacks, but uptick of flu vaccines in asthma patients often remains low. They thought concerns about vaccine effectiveness may be behind this low vaccination rate.



Seasonal severity, vaccine effectiveness not associated with flu vaccination rates

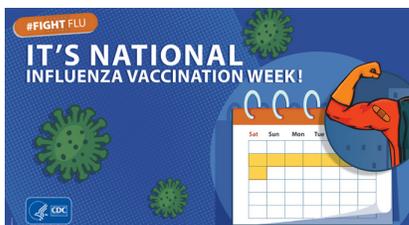
Nov. 21, 2019; [Healio](#)

Neither seasonal severity nor vaccine effectiveness were associated with influenza vaccination rates over eight recent influenza seasons, although vaccination rates have decreased overall in recent years, according to study findings published in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

“We as clinicians often think to ourselves that we can ‘predict’ influenza vaccine uptake based on the severity of influenza, particularly in the previous season, or reports of vaccine effectiveness,” Melissa S. Stockwell, MD MPH, associate professor of pediatrics and population and family health at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, told *Infectious Diseases in Children*. “We were surprised to see that, at least nationally, that did not seem to be a case.”



HIGHLIGHTS



Next week (Dec. 1-7) is National Influenza Vaccination Week!

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) highlights the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond.

NIVW serves as a reminder that even though the holiday season has arrived, it's not too late to get a flu vaccine.

As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination should continue throughout the flu season in order to protect as many people as possible against flu. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season. If you haven't already, it's not too late to get a flu vaccine!

Additional information and resources for NIVW can be found on CDC's website [here](#).

#GIVING
TUESDAY

December 3rd is GivingTuesday!

GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world on December 3, 2019 and every day.

It was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past seven years, this idea has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

Please consider donating to FFF on GivingTuesday!



#FluShotSelfie Social Media Campaign

It's not too late to vaccinate! Join us in our #FluShotSelfie campaign on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to show others how we protect ourselves and others with an annual flu vaccine! Simply use the hashtag and feel free to tag us!



Flu Champion Program

FFF's [Flu Champion program](#) aims to mobilize and support people at the community level in flu awareness and education efforts. As part of this program, FFF has developed four different advocacy toolkits for schools, healthcare professionals, employers and community organizations, and general advocates. Interested in becoming a Flu Champion yourself? Reach out to us at contact@familiesfightingflu.org.



#1 holiday hack:

When you buy your gifts
at smile.amazon.com,
Amazon donates.

amazonsmile

Holiday shopping? Choose Families Fighting Flu as a charity on AmazonSmile at no cost to you!



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