Seasonal flu activity in the United States has increased slightly, but remains low.

- 2.4% of respiratory specimens tested in clinical laboratories were positive for influenza viruses.
- Influenza A (H3N2) and Influenza B/Victoria viruses have been the most common so far, with influenza A (H3N2) viruses slightly outnumbering influenza B/Victoria viruses.
- 1.9% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness, which is below the national baseline of 2.4%.
- 5.1% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 5.8%.
- No new pediatric flu deaths were reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 43. The total for the season is 2.
Florida lawmakers push to allow pharmacists to treat and test flu and strep throat

Oct. 23, 2019; FOX4

FORT MYERS, Fla. -- Some state lawmakers are aiming to help those who get the flu or strep throat in Florida to avoid a trip to the doctor’s office.

Two bills have been proposed to allow pharmacists to do both the testing and treating.

“It will make access to healthcare quicker,” said pharmacist T.J. DePaola at Cypress Pharmacy in Fort Myers.

A Florida Senate bill and House bill proposes to let pharmacists test and treat patients for the flu and strep throat.

She was called the n-word and given instructions to slit her wrists. What did Facebook do?

Nov. 1, 2019; CNN

You can call someone the n-word and give her graphic instructions on how to kill herself, and you won’t get kicked off Facebook.

Or you can tell a mother you hope her son gets raped, and you won’t get kicked off the world’s most popular social media platform. Or you can tell a mother whose 5-year-old daughter has died that "if your kids keep dying it’s god trying to tell u u don’t deserve them."
Measles wipe immune system's memory of other illnesses, studies find

Measles can erase the immune system's memory, leaving us vulnerable to diseases we were previously protected against, new research has found.

Two separate studies, published Thursday in the journals *Science* and *Science Immunology*, found that the highly contagious and potentially fatal measles virus can cause "immune amnesia," removing antibodies that had protected patients from other illnesses.

Researchers from the Harvard Medical School, who led the *Science* study, examined blood samples from children before and after getting measles. They found that the virus wipes out 11% to 73% of patients' protective antibodies, putting them at greater risk of viral and bacterial strains they were previously immune to.

High-dose flu shots are a more effective option for the elderly

Flu season is fast approaching. For many, it’s time to decide among the various influenza vaccine options.

Options include inactivated influenza vaccine, recombinant influenza vaccine, or live attenuated influenza vaccine. Different vaccines can be licensed for different age groups, and some vaccines are not recommended for certain age groups.

Conspicuously, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) doesn’t give a preferential recommendation for a particular flu vaccine.

Nevertheless, for the elderly certain flu vaccines are more effective than others.

New study: 1 in 7 child deaths result from pneumonia, the flu, & other LRIs

Despite large declines since 1990 in child deaths from pneumonia and the flu, these and other lower respiratory infections (LRIs) remain a leading killer of children under age 5.

A new scientific study finds LRIs responsible for one in seven child deaths globally.

"Our findings reveal no 'one size fits all' solution exists to reduce child mortality significantly from LRIs in every country," said Dr. Bobby Reiner, senior author on the study and Associate Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington School of Medicine. "So how do we make progress? By tailoring to the needs of each country and by looking
holistically at all drivers of change, from air pollution to vaccine coverage, from increasing breastfeeding to antibiotic use.

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**What you need to know ahead of this year’s flu season**

**Nov. 4, 2019; CNBC**

A surge in influenza cases in Australia and at least three deaths in the U.S. in recent weeks have some physicians worried that this year’s flu season could be a bad one for Americans.

Though public health officials say they don’t know yet whether the 2019-2020 season will be worse than usual, they are still urging people to get their flu vaccines before it kicks into high gear. Australia, which is just getting over its flu season, saw a surge in cases with the H3N2 strain.

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**#FluShotSelfie Social Media Campaign**

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!

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**Flu Champion Program**

FFF recently launched its Flu Champion program, which 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.