



FAMILIES

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WEEKLY FLU NEWS

October 14, 2019

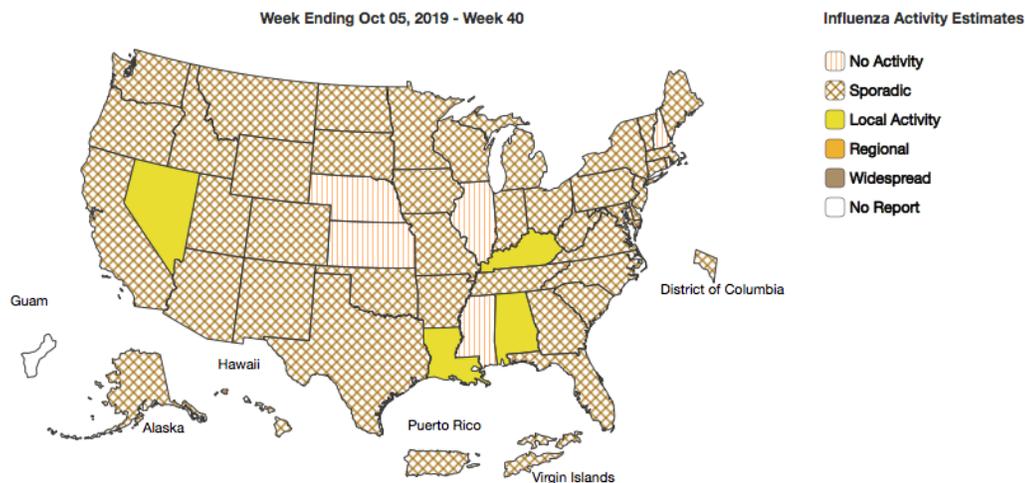


CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 40, Ending Oct. 5, 2019

Oct. 11, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This is the first FluView report for the 2019-2020 season. According to the report, seasonal flu activity remains low in the United States.

- 3.1% of respiratory specimens tested in clinical laboratories were positive for influenza viruses.
- Influenza A viruses predominated this week with equal numbers of H3N2 and H1N1pdm09 viruses reported.
- 1.4% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness, which is below the national baseline of 2.4%.
- 5.0% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 5.6%.
- No pediatric flu deaths were reported during week 40. The season total for the 2018-2019 season is 138 children.





Large numbers of pregnant women not getting key vaccines, CDC says

Oct. 8, 2019; [STAT](#)

A significant percentage of pregnant women are not getting a pair of critically important vaccines despite persistent efforts by public health officials to encourage immunizations, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

An online survey conducted last spring showed that just over half of pregnant women had received flu and pertussis-containing vaccines during their pregnancies; only 35% received both.



Should toddlers get the flu shot? Experts explain

Oct. 8, 2019; [Romper](#)

October is full of scary stuff — horror movie marathons on TV, spooky Halloween decorations, Columbus Day — but perhaps the scariest event of all is the beginning of flu season. Fortunately, there's a vaccine for that, but should toddlers get the flu shot? The question is understandable, but according to experts, the answer is clear.



Nurse pens powerful post about flu shot

Oct. 11, 2019; [WebMD](#)

“The flu shot is NOT always about you. It's about protecting those around you, who cannot always protect themselves.”

A nurse's Facebook post is going viral after she penned a powerful statement urging everyone to get a flu shot.

Amanda Bitz writes that we shouldn't just get vaccinated to keep ourselves healthy. Instead, it's “for the grandparents, whose bodies are not what they used to be, and they just can't kick an illness in the butt like when they were young. For the 30 year old, with HIV or AIDS, who has a weakened immune system. For the 25-year-old mother of three who has cancer. She has absolutely zero immune system because of chemotherapy.”



Why you should track flu outbreaks this flu season

Oct. 9, 2019; [CNET](#)

If you've ever had the flu, you know just how bad the symptoms can be. From a sore throat, cough, aches, chills and a high fever -- it's not fun and can lead to more serious issues, even death in severe cases. In fact, the CDC estimates that from October 2018-May 2019, there were 37.4 million-42.9 million reported flu illnesses, and between 36,400-61,200 deaths from the flu.

If those numbers aren't enough to make you want to get a flu shot, then just talk to someone who had the flu last year and, chances are, they'll tell you they wish they would have gotten the shot.



Flu can be catastrophic in older patients: 5 things to know

Oct. 9, 2019; Medscape

Not everyone experiences the same effects from influenza. Adults aged 65 years or older suffer the most severe health effects, accounting for approximately 90% of influenza-related deaths and 50%–70% of hospitalizations. They also have an increased likelihood of suffering long-term sequelae, including persistent loss of function and disability.



Get vaccinated before flu takes hold: CDC

Oct. 10, 2019; U.S. World & News Report

If Australia was any indication, the flu season here will arrive early, so get your flu shot now, U.S. health officials said Thursday. While the flu that circulated in the Southern Hemisphere in the past six months seemed severe, that was more the result of an early arrival of the season and better reporting of cases, said Dr. Scott Epperson, an epidemiologist in the influenza division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



CDC Report: Update: Influenza Activity — United States and Worldwide, May 19–September 28, 2019, and Composition of the 2020 Southern Hemisphere Influenza Vaccine

Oct. 11, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

During May 19–September 28, 2019, low levels of influenza activity were reported in the United States, with co-circulation of influenza A and influenza B viruses. In the Southern Hemisphere seasonal influenza viruses circulated widely, with influenza A(H3) predominating in many regions; however, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and influenza B viruses were predominant in some countries. In late September, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended components for the 2020 Southern Hemisphere influenza vaccine and included an update to the A(H3N2) and

B/Victoria-lineage components. Annual influenza vaccination is the best means for preventing influenza illness and its complications, and vaccination before influenza activity increases is optimal. Health care providers should recommend vaccination for all persons aged ≥ 6 months who do not have contraindications to vaccination.



CDC Report: Vital Signs: Burden and Prevention of Influenza and Pertussis Among Pregnant Women and Infants – United States

Oct. 8, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Vaccinating pregnant women with influenza vaccine and tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid, and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) can reduce influenza and pertussis risk for themselves and their infants. Surveillance data were analyzed to ascertain influenza-associated hospitalization among pregnant women and infant hospitalization and death associated with influenza and pertussis. An Internet panel survey was conducted during March 27–April 8, 2019, among women aged 18–49 years who reported being pregnant any time since August 1, 2018. Influenza vaccination before or during pregnancy was assessed among respondents with known influenza vaccination status who were pregnant any time during October 2018–January 2019.



HIGHLIGHTS



Sioux Falls Immunization Conference & Fight the Flu 5K Run

One of our Board members, Angie Wehrkamp, shared her daughter's story at the Sioux Falls Area Immunization Coalition (SFAIC) conference on October 10, 2019. Angie lost her healthy, two-year-old daughter, Gianna, to the flu in 2015. Angie is a coalition member and is helping spearhead a co-branded initiative with SFAIC and FFF to educate parents and daycare providers in the Sioux Falls area about the importance of annual flu vaccination. Angie also participated in SFAIC's inaugural Fight the Flu 5K run, where she and her family had an exhibit booth and handed out FFF educational materials to the community.

Ayzlee's Family Flu Clinics



Are you located near Cass County, Iowa? If so, and you need a flu shot, our Board member, Amber McCarthy, can help! Amber and her family, in conjunction with the Cass County Health System, are holding [flu clinics](#) for the local community in honor of their daughter, Ayzlee, who passed away from the flu at 3 years old in 2014.



Family Fundraiser in Holly Springs, NC

Michelle and Doug Stein lost their niece, Jessica, to the flu at 4 years old. To honor Jessica and educate their local community about the seriousness of flu and the importance of annual flu vaccination, they held their 3rd annual FFF fundraiser at Bombshell Beer Company, where over 20 people got their flu shot!



#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!



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.



New Family Stories

Check out our new family stories about adult flu survivors, including [Allison Miller](#), [Christa Mitchell](#), and [Nick Fulweiler](#). Interested in sharing your flu story with us? Send us an email at contact@familiesfightingflu.org.



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