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WEEKLY FLU NEWS

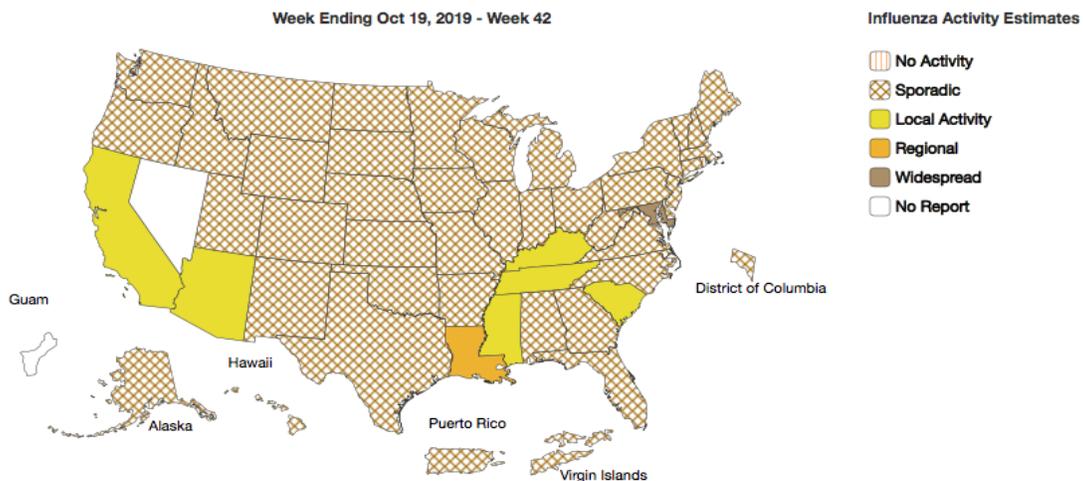
October 28, 2019



CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 42, Ending Oct. 19, 2019

Oct. 25, 2019; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- 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 circulated at similar levels for the overall season.
- 1.7% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness, which is below the national baseline of 2.4%.
- 4.9% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 5.7%.
- The first two pediatric flu deaths for the 2019-2020 season were reported during week 42.





Associations urge flu vaccinations to prevent diabetes, CV complications

Oct. 26, 2019; [Healio](#)

The American Diabetes Association, the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association are working together to urge adults living with chronic diseases to prioritize annual influenza vaccination and to encourage health care providers to advocate for and support influenza immunization within their practices, according to a press release from the organizations.

Last season's influenza outbreak was one of the worst in recent years, according to data from the CDC, with overall hospitalizations in 2018 topping those in 2017, along with an alarming increase in influenza-associated deaths in children and adults. National public health officials have stepped up efforts to educate Americans on the impact of influenza on chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, which puts people at higher risks for complications, such as pneumonia, bronchitis and sinus infections, in addition to increasing hypoglycemia risk.



Broadly protective antibodies could lead to better flu treatments and vaccines

Oct. 25, 2019; [National Institutes of Health](#)

A newly identified set of three antibodies could lead to better treatments and vaccines against influenza, according to a paper published this week in *Science*. Researchers supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, isolated the antibodies from a person sick with the flu five days after the onset of symptoms. They found that the antibodies, which bind to neuraminidase (NA) proteins on the surface of influenza viruses, provided broad protection against several different strains of influenza when tested both in vitro and in mice.



This inexpensive action lowers hospital infections and protects against flu season

Oct. 17, 2019; [Forbes](#)

While practicing pediatric oncology at a major teaching hospital, Harvard Medical School graduate and lecturer, Stephanie Taylor wondered why so many of her young patients came down with infections and the flu, despite the hospital's herculean efforts at prevention. Her hunch: the design and infrastructure of the building contributed somehow.

The one factor most associated with infection was (drum roll): dry air. At low relative humidity, indoor air was strongly associated with higher infection rates. "When we dry the air out, droplets and skin flakes carrying viruses and bacteria are launched

into the air, traveling far and over long periods of time. The microbes that survive this launching tend to be the ones that cause healthcare-associated infections,” said Taylor. “Even worse, in addition to this increased exposure to infectious particles, the dry air also harms our natural immune barriers which protect us from infections.”



New drug on the horizon for flu's ills?

Oct. 23, 2019; [WebMD](#)

Flu sufferers may soon have a new antiviral drug on hand to ease their fever, chills and body aches.

The new pill, which targets the genetics of influenza viruses, has shown that it can reduce fever and respiratory symptoms in lab animals, as well as reducing the overall amount of virus in their bodies, researchers report.

Preparations are underway for human trials of the "next-generation" drug, EIDD-2801, said senior researcher Richard Plemper, a professor with the Institute of Biomedical Sciences at Georgia State University.



UVA researchers harnessing big data's power to fight the flu

Oct. 25, 2019; [University of Virginia](#)

This year, people in the Northern Hemisphere may experience a particularly bad season, as Australia has just finished a severe flu season. But it's always difficult to predict when and where flu will strike most severely. An axiom often stated by epidemiologists is, “The only thing predictable about the flu is that it's unpredictable.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working to change that, however, by harnessing the power of supercomputing and big data analysis to find better ways to mitigate the flu season with targeted intervention programs.

The agency has awarded the University of Virginia's Biocomplexity Institute a one-year contract to help determine if computer modeling and simulation could work well for developing coordinated, multilayered interventions that could effectively slow or reduce the spread of flu regionally and nationally.



Welcome to flu season. Here's your best shot at staying healthy

Oct. 22, 2019; [PBSNewsHour](#)

Whether you're making the rounds with your exceedingly clever Halloween costume (only you will show up as The Joker, really), or chauffeuring your child from one pumpkin-carving party funland to the next, autumn is rich with sweet memory-making — until you notice that sniffling partygoer cough onto the spread of

pumpkin spice cupcakes. It's the start of flu season, and dread washes over you when you imagine what will happen if influenza invades your home.

But you can relax (a little) if you follow these expert recommendations.

1. Get your flu vaccine.
2. Wash your hands. A lot.
3. Avoid people who are coughing and sneezing.
4. Feel sick? Pick up an antiviral medication.



HIGHLIGHTS



#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.



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