

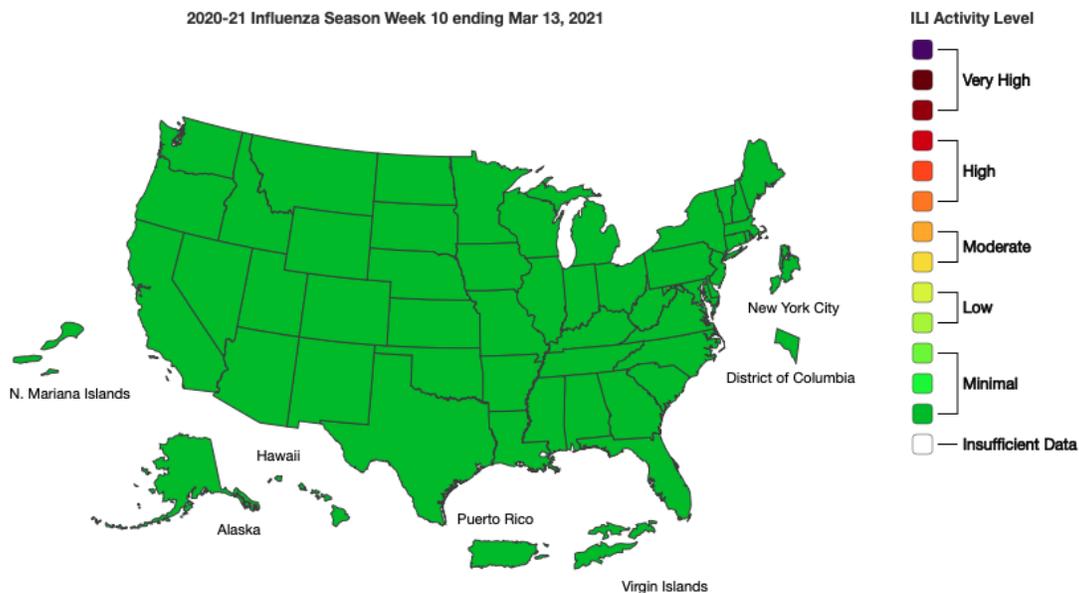


Weekly Flu News



CDC: Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report - Week 10 ending March 13, 2021; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Seasonal influenza activity in the United States remains lower than usual for this time of year.
- 0.1% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza this week.
- 0.9% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness (ILI). ILI remains below the national baseline of 2.6%.
- Current cumulative hospitalization rate is 0.7 per 100,000 population.
- 13.3% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia, influenza, or COVID-19.
- No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 10. A total of one influenza-associated pediatric death occurring during the 2020-2021 season has been reported to CDC.





Covid-19 Meant a Year Without the Flu. That's Not All Good News; [WIRED](#)

What worries modelers isn't so much the flu-less winter of 2020-21 but the next seasons for the flu, RSV, and EV-D68. Epidemiologic models that establish parameters for counting the numbers of susceptible, infected, and recovered people—SIR models—show some variation of the same worrisome outcome: After a season in which none of the susceptible people turn into infected people, the next season is a lot worse. "We know that for both influenza and RSV, your antibody protection wanes over time. Now we've got an entire population that's had no boost," Martin says. "If we're not even having those low level exposures, it really means an open playing field for the viruses next season."



Fear of 'Twindemic' Eases as Flu Activity Remains Historically Low; [Infectious Disease Special Edition](#)

U.S. influenza activity during the 2020-2021 season has remained extremely low, easing fears that the COVID-19 pandemic and annual flu season would result in a particularly high, devastating period of activity. "While community mitigation efforts to fight COVID-19 have differed across the world, and even across the country, it is likely that these measures taken to slow or prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 have had an impact on the spread of other pathogens, including influenza," explained Lynnette Brammer, MPH, the team lead, CDC's Domestic Influenza Surveillance Team, Influenza Division.



Plant-Based Vaccine Manufacturing for Influenza, Implications for Future Vaccines; [Infectious Disease Advisor](#)

Currently, the development of vaccines for influenza and other viruses typically relies on egg-based manufacturing. This approach, and the newer technique of vaccine production in cell cultures, carry the risk of mutations that may reduce the efficacy and immunogenicity of the vaccines. Additionally, there are ongoing needs for greater production

speed and capacity to enable adequate epidemic and pandemic response. An emerging body of research highlights plant-based vaccine manufacturing as a potential solution to some of these limitations. Results of 2 randomized, observer-blinded phase 3 studies evaluated the efficacy of a recombinant quadrivalent virus-like particle (QVLP) influenza vaccine manufactured in *Nicotiana benthamiana*, a relative of the common tobacco plant. These studies represent the first large trials of any plant-derived human vaccine.



Extremely Low Influenza Rates Challenge Next Season’s Flu Shot; [Bloomberg](#)

The WHO last month made recommendations on which flu strains to adopt in this season’s shots in the Northern Hemisphere, including a few new strains for both egg and cell-based shots. The Food and Drug Administration’s advisory panel adopted those recommendations. “There was still enough circulating influenza to make an informed choice for next year’s vaccine,” Paul Offit, a member of the FDA panel, who’s the director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.



Flu guidance the same as last season: AAP; [AAP News](#)

No changes will be made to the AAP influenza vaccination recommendations for the 2021-'22 season. Either type of available flu vaccine (flu shot or nasal spray) can be given according to their indications. The Academy is making the announcement now to help inform pediatric practices as they pre-book vaccine orders for the upcoming season. The AAP policy statement on influenza immunization in children will be published later this year in *Pediatrics*. Influenza activity has been at a record low this season. As a result, vaccine effectiveness data used to make influenza vaccine recommendations for the next season were unavailable. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will not be finalizing its recommendations until the June 23 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, it also has indicated that no changes are anticipated.



mRNA Treatment Shows Promise for Stopping Flu and COVID-19 Viruses; [Global Biodefense](#)

With a relatively minor genetic change, a new treatment developed by researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University appears to stop replication of both flu viruses and the virus that causes Covid-19. The treatment could be delivered to the lungs via a nebulizer, making it easy for patients to administer themselves at home. The therapy is based on a type of CRISPR, which normally allows researchers to target and edit specific portions of the genetic code, to target RNA molecules. In this case, the team used mRNA technology to code for a protein called Cas13a that destroys parts of the RNA genetic code that viruses use to replicate in cells in the lungs.

Updates & Announcements

New Patient Video: Widow Reminds Adults To Get Annual Flu Vaccinations

We're highlighting another new patient video in our blog, *Insights on Influenza*. [Lisa Rasmussen](#) lost her healthy, 57-year-old husband to flu-related complications and she reminds adults of the importance of annual flu vaccinations.



ICYMI: Families Fighting Flu On-Demand CME Webinars on Influenza

We're offering two on-demand webinars on What's New in Flu? Emerging Evidence in Management and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis.

Session 1: Influenza: Acting Beyond Treatment to Protect Everyone

Session 2: Influenza in the COVID-19 Era When Effective Treatment and Post-exposure Prophylaxis Matter

Join expert clinicians, Jeb Teichman, MD and Andrew Eisenberg, MD, along with Serese Marotta from Families Fighting Flu, for two educational sessions on the diagnostic requirements for initiating antivirals, the guidelines for treatment and prophylaxis of influenza, and emerging evidence and approvals in influenza treatments and post-exposure prophylaxis. This complimentary, accredited activity is intended for pediatricians, family medicine/internal medicine physicians, pharmacists, NPs, and PAs. View these webinars on demand [here](#).



Looking for Ways to Get Involved?

There are many ways to get involved with the Families Fighting Flu organization. You can promote flu awareness, fundraise, distribute educational materials, and even get your kids involved! Check out some ways to engage [here](#) and consider becoming a [Flu Champion](#) in your community!



Promote Maternal Vaccinations for Flu and Tdap

Flu and whooping cough present serious potential risks to pregnant women and infants. Help educate others about the importance of maternal immunizations using our [new educational materials and social media assets](#), which are available in English and Spanish.



Our Contact Information

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