



FAMILIES

FIGHTING FLU, INC.®

WEEKLY FLU NEWS

April 6, 2020

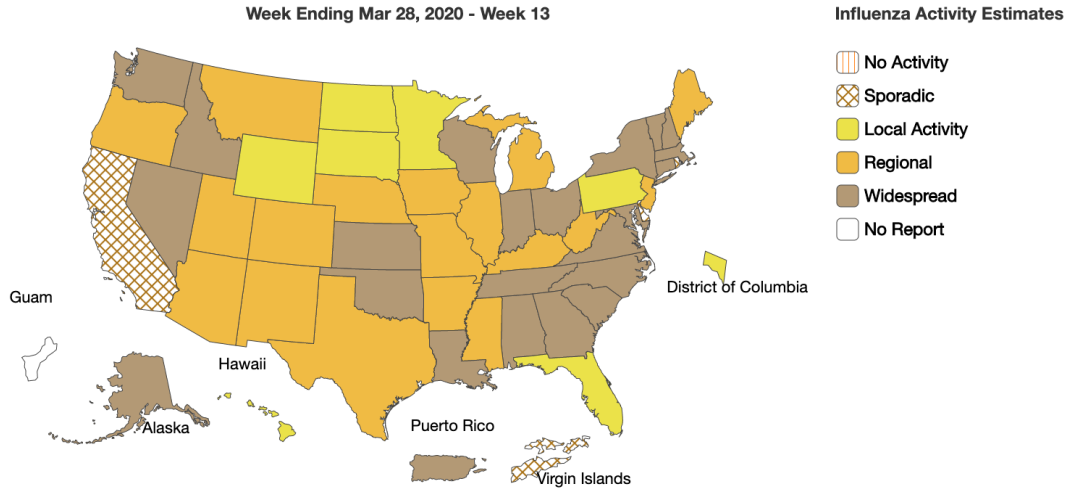


CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 13, Ending Mar. 28, 2020

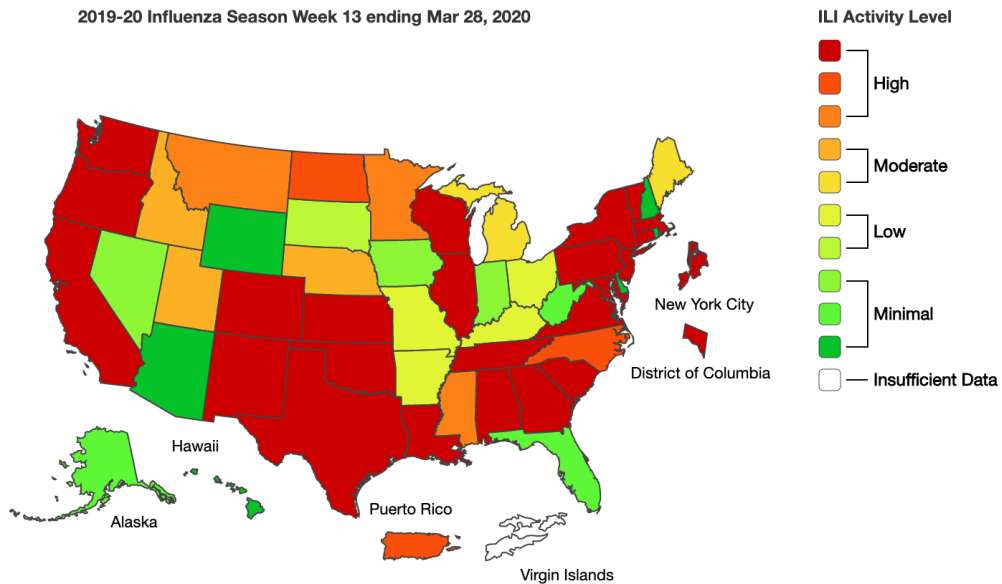
Apr. 3, 2020; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories continued to decrease; however, influenza-like illness activity is still elevated.
- 2.1% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza.
- Nationally, influenza A (H1N1) viruses are most common at this time. Previously, influenza B/Victoria viruses predominated nationally.
- 5.4% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness. All 10 regions remain above their baselines.
- The overall hospitalization rate is 67.9 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 8.2% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is above the epidemic threshold.
- Seven new pediatric flu deaths were reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 13. The total for the season is 162.

Week Ending Mar 28, 2020 - Week 13



2019-20 Influenza Season Week 13 ending Mar 28, 2020



2019-2020 U.S. Flu Season: Preliminary Burden Estimates

Apr. 3, 2020; CDC

CDC estimates that, from October 1, 2019, through March 28, 2020, there have been:

- 39 - 55 million flu illnesses
- 18 - 26 million flu medical visits
- 400,000 - 730,000 flu hospitalizations
- 24,000 - 63,000 flu deaths

Families Fighting Flu Joins Coalition to Stop Flu



Apr. 2, 2020; Coalition to Stop Flu

Families Fighting Flu is pleased to announce that we are a founding member of the Coalition to Stop Flu, a new multi-sector advocacy coalition dedicated to ending deaths from seasonal and pandemic influenza.

Led by former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, the Coalition will work with Congress and the Administration to advocate for increased federal funding and proactive policy solutions to stop influenza deaths; raise awareness and prioritization for seasonal and pandemic influenza preparedness; and serve as a united voice and trusted resource for policymakers. View the press release and learn more [here](#).



Influenza Vaccine Associated With Reduced Respiratory Morbidity, Mortality Risk in Autoimmune Rheumatic Diseases

Apr. 2, 2020; Rheumatology Advisor

Inactivated influenza vaccine is associated with reduced risk for respiratory morbidity and mortality in patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases (AIRDs), according to study results published in *Rheumatology*.

In this study, researchers assessed the effectiveness of the inactivated influenza vaccine in preventing influenza-like illness, lower respiratory tract infection, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbations, and death in adult patients with AIRDs.

Study results showed that vaccination reduced the risk for hospitalizations with pneumonia, COPD exacerbations, all-cause mortality, and death due to pneumonia in that influenza season. In addition, vaccination reduced the risk for primary care consultation for influenza-like illness when the analysis was restricted to the period when influenza viruses circulated.



How are seasonal influenza vaccines developing?

Apr. 2, 2020; Drug Target Review

Seasonal influenza vaccines are growing ever more important with the global aging population as, while typically not fatal to healthy individuals, the disease can be deadly in both the old and very young. For example, the US winter period in 2017-2018 saw an estimated 60,000 deaths occur due to the flu, with many affected over the age of 65.

The immune system is less capable of overcoming infections or responding appropriately to immunization as people age. One method that has been used to overcome this is the addition of an adjuvant to the formulation of a vaccine.

Overall, the shift to quadrivalent vaccines should provide greater coverage of influenza strains while further research continues into how the body reacts to influenza and vaccines to hopefully, one day, provide the basis of a universal vaccine.



Fact check: Getting flu shot doesn't make you more (or less) likely to get the coronavirus

Apr. 1, 2020; [USA Today](#)

As the novel coronavirus continues to spread across the United States, a handful of posts on Facebook have claimed those who received the influenza vaccine are either more likely to test positive for the virus or to become sick with it.

Researchers update the flu shot annually to protect from strains of the influenza virus. Each shot protects from either three strains (trivalent) or four strains (quadrivalent) of influenza. The vaccine does not include any of the coronaviruses, a family of viruses that includes some that give people upper respiratory illnesses. It also is not meant to protect someone from them.

Since coronavirus isn't in the flu shot, the shot won't give anyone symptoms of the coronavirus or cause them to test positive, said Dr. Christie Alexander, president of Florida Academy of Family Physicians and associate professor for the Florida State University College of Medicine.



Presence of Influenza Virus on Touch-Surfaces in Kindergartens and Primary Schools

Mar. 16, 2020; [Journal of Infectious Diseases](#)

Influenza viruses can survive on some surfaces, facilitating indirect person-to-person transmission. Researchers collected swab samples weekly from commonly-touched surfaces in 7 kindergartens and primary schools during the 2017/18 winter influenza season in Hong Kong.

Viral RNA was more frequently recovered from communal items inside classrooms such as bookshelves and doorknobs, suggesting these surfaces may cause greater potential risks of transmission during influenza epidemics. Surface contamination indicates the potential role of fomites in influenza virus transmission in schools.



Analysis: Spanish Flu Pandemic Proves Social Distancing Works

Apr. 5, 2020; [ContagionLive](#)

As Americans enter their second month of homebound social-distancing, politicians and other public health officials are pondering the question of just how long it will be necessary to cancel public gatherings. Some have wondered aloud whether long-term isolation is even necessary to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In a new paper published in the Journal of the American Society of Cytopathology, Stefan E. Pambuccian, MD, MIAC, a professor and vice chair of the department of pathology and laboratory medicine at Loyola University Chicago's Stritch School of Medicine attempts to answer those questions using the "Spanish Influenza" pandemic of 1918-1919 as a model. In short, his answer to the question of whether social distancing works is: yes.

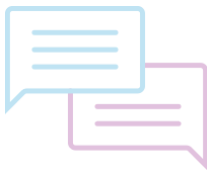


FFF Blog: COVID-19 vs. Flu: How Do They Compare?

Apr. 3, 2020; [Families Fighting Flu](#)

The 2019-2020 flu season in the U.S. has set records for flu-related hospitalizations and pediatric deaths, but now we're also dealing with a pandemic of a new (novel) coronavirus, called COVID-19. While both are viruses, influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are very different in some respects.

Learn how these viruses are defined, common symptoms, how these diseases spread, and more in our recent blog post.



Join our new Facebook group: Flu Fighting Forum

Want to learn more about flu? Join our new group that is focused solely on flu education and advocacy: [Flu Fighting Forum](#). This group, run by Families Fighting Flu, is a place for conversations about flu prevention, burden, and activity while offering opportunities for flu education and advocacy.



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