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WEEKLY FLU NEWS

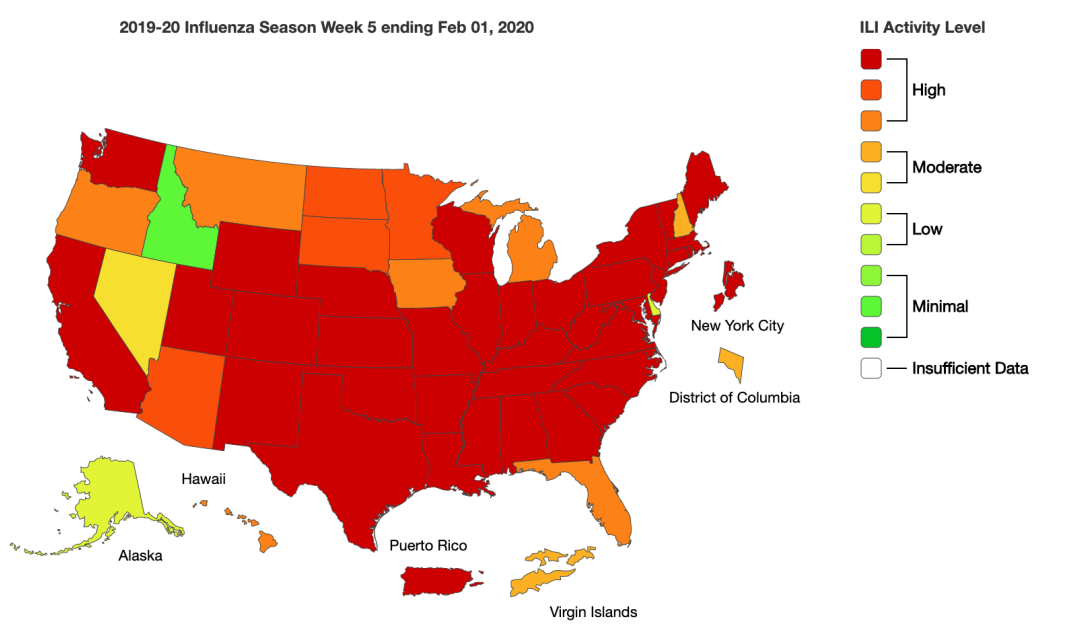
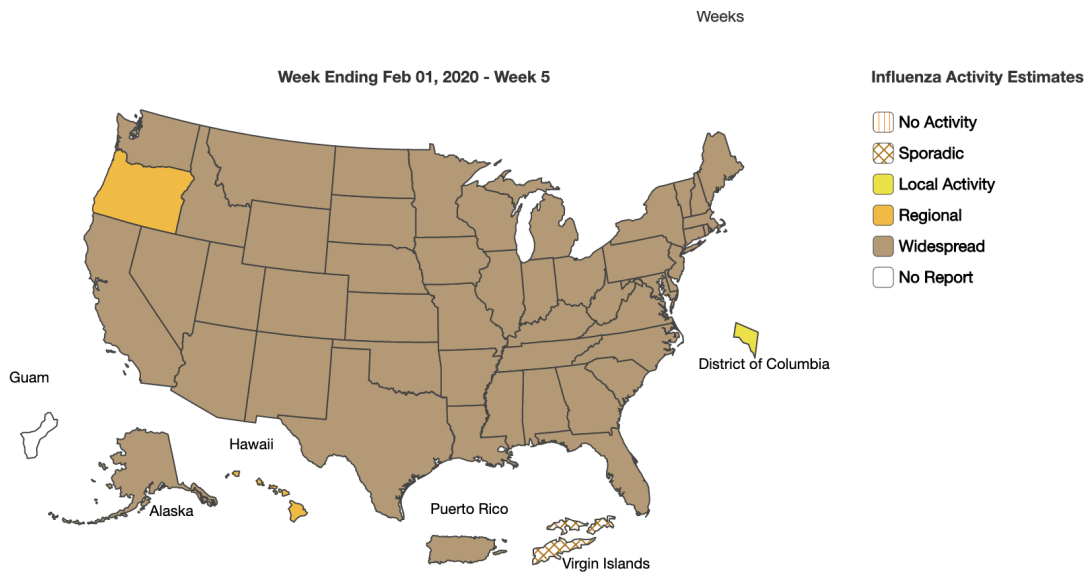
February 10, 2020



CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 5, Ending Feb. 1, 2020

Feb. 7, 2020; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Seasonal flu activity in the United States is high and continues to increase. Flu activity has been elevated for 13 weeks.
- 29.8% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza.
- Nationally, influenza B/Victoria viruses and H1N1 viruses are most common this season. There have been continued increases in H1N1 viruses in recent weeks. Predominant viruses vary by region and age group.
- 6.7% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness. All 10 regions were above their baselines and continuing to increase.
- The overall hospitalization rate is 35.5 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 7.1% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold.
- Ten new pediatric flu deaths were reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 5. The total for the season is 78.



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

Feb. 7, 2020, CDC

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

- 22 - 31 million flu illnesses
- 10 - 15 million flu medical visits
- 210,000 - 370,000 flu hospitalizations
- 12,000 - 30,000 flu deaths



Research confirms safety of prenatal influenza vaccination

Feb. 5, 2020; [Kaiser Permanente](#)

A Kaiser Permanente study confirms the safety of flu vaccination during pregnancy. The study found that women who were given inactivated influenza vaccine while pregnant had no indication of developmental problems for their babies at 6 months old. The findings were published Feb. 5 in the journal *Vaccine*.

The authors compared 799 of the women who received the vaccine with 426 who did not. They found no association with negative developmental effects after controlling for factors such as flu status during pregnancy, high-risk medical conditions, and maternal vaccination before pregnancy.



Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule: United States, 2020

Feb. 1, 2020; [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

The 2020 recommended childhood and adolescent immunization schedules have been updated and approved. Everyone six months and older, except those with contraindications, are still recommended to receive an annual flu vaccination.

The language in the childhood vaccination schedule for influenza vaccination was updated for clarity. The routine recommendations section was reformatted to more clearly outline circumstances under which 1 or 2 doses of influenza vaccine are recommended. Additionally, the situations under which live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) should not be used was reformatted to a bulleted list instead of a paragraph.



Study Finds Link Between Flu Risk and Wild Weather Swings

Feb. 3, 2020; [Environmental Research Letters](#)

The 2017-2018 flu season was one of the warmest on record and was also one of the deadliest. The fall of 2017 saw wild swings in weather, and scientists at Florida State University and Nanjing University in China were curious whether those fluctuations were to blame for the severe flu season.

The researchers analyzed surface temperatures, weather patterns, and health records from January 1, 1997 to February 28, 2018, a total of 7,729 days. They found that years with intense weather fluctuations in the autumn months incited the flu, creating a robust patient population early in flu season that continued to grow throughout the winter.

The study authors modeled that given the rate at which the climate is warming, the risk of an influenza epidemic may increase 20% to 50% in some highly populated regions later in the 21st century.

The Flu Is Hitting Children Especially Hard This Season



Feb. 3, 2020; [Wall Street Journal](#)

More than half of the positive influenza test results from public health laboratories this flu season have been in children and adults under the age of 25, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent weekly influenza report. That's a higher portion than in the past few years, when less than half the cases were in kids and young adults.

Experts say that even if the vaccine doesn't exactly match the circulating strains, it's still far better to get a flu shot than to skip it. The vaccine helps lessen the duration and severity of the illness for people who do get sick. And most importantly, vaccination helps prevent the spread of flu to others, including infants 6 months and under, who can't get a flu shot.



On Facebook, anti-vaxxers urged a mom not to give her son Tamiflu. He later died.

Feb. 7, 2020; [NBC News](#)

Facebook groups that routinely traffic in anti-vaccination propaganda have become a resource for people seeking out a wide variety of medical information — including about the ongoing flu season.

Facebook hosts a vast network of groups that trade in false health information. On “Stop Mandatory Vaccination,” one of the largest known health misinformation groups with more than 178,000 members, people have solicited advice for how to deal with the flu. Members of the group have previously spread conspiracies that outbreaks of preventable diseases are “hoaxes” perpetrated by the government, and use the groups to mass-contact parents whose children have died and suggest without evidence that vaccines may be to blame.



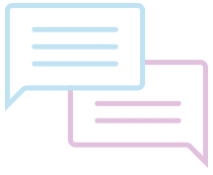
New tool monitors real time mutations in flu

Feb. 6, 2020; [Science Daily](#)

A Rutgers-led team has developed a tool to monitor influenza A virus mutations in real time, which could help virologists learn how to stop viruses from replicating.

The gold nanoparticle-based probe measures viral RNA in live influenza A cells, according to a study in *The Journal of Physical Chemistry C*. It is the first time in virology that experts have used imaging tools with gold nanoparticles to monitor mutations in influenza, with unparalleled sensitivity.

**We're excited to announce the launch of our new blog,
[Insights on Influenza!](#)**



Want to learn more about flu? Check out our new **blog** featuring evidence-based articles on various flu-related topics, including flu prevention, flu news & surveillance, flu vaccine information, flu facts, and more! We plan on developing new blog articles twice a month to share in-depth flu-related information in an effort to help others learn more about flu prevention and treatment. Interested in a particular blog topic? Let us know by reaching out to us at contact@familiesfightingflu.org.



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