



Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

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Health Update

Local Transmission of Influenza A H1N1 Has Peaked; RSV Incidence is Rising November 19, 2009

In the last two weeks, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health has identified a decrease of influenza activity in the local area. Laboratory-confirmed influenza A reports, influenza-like illness visits to local emergency departments, and the number of reported hospitalized cases declined last week for the first time in several weeks. Despite the decline, influenza activity still remains highly elevated for this time of year. Laboratory subtyping of respiratory specimens indicates that only influenza A H1N1 is circulating locally.

PDPH continues to gather information regarding severe (i.e. hospitalized or fatal) cases of influenza A H1N1. Since September 1, 411 hospitalized and 4 fatal cases of influenza A have been reported. From November 8–18, 76 hospitalized cases of influenza A and 3 suspected H1N1 deaths were reported. Of the suspected deaths, 2 were pediatric cases. Persons <18 years continue to represent the bulk of hospitalized cases. Vaccination continues to be the safest way to prevent influenza A H1N1 and complications associated with infection.

In addition to influenza A H1N1, several hospital laboratories have detected respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in over 10% of clinical specimens submitted. Those at high risk for severe RSV-related illness include the elderly, immunocompromised persons, infants, children under 2 years of age with chronic lung disease, and premature infants < 35 weeks gestation at birth. Select high-risk children <24 months of age and infants born before 32 weeks' gestation without chronic lung disease may benefit from Palivizumab, the RSV monoclonal antibody preparation given monthly during RSV season to prevent RSV lower respiratory tract disease. For more information, please consult the 2009 *Red Book* of the American Academy of Pediatrics, as key recommendations have been updated.

Additional surveillance data can be found on hip.phila.gov. Hospitalized, fatal, and pregnant cases of influenza can be reported via fax to 215-545-8362. Outbreaks can be reported by calling 215-685-6748 or 215-686-4514 (after hours).

Weekly Laboratory-Based Surveillance for Influenza A, RSV, and Rhinovirus: Philadelphia, 2009-2010 Season

