

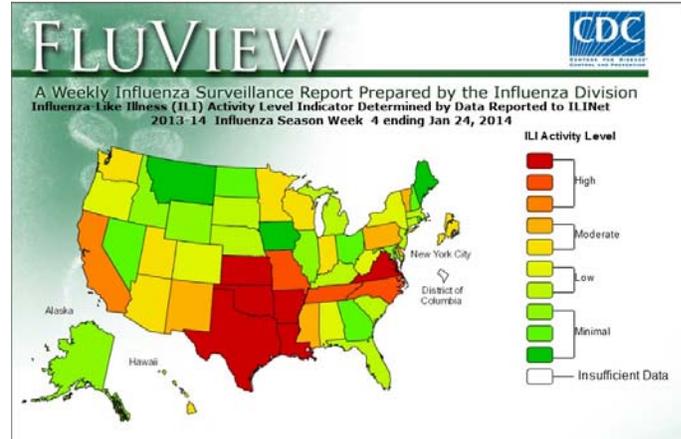


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Flu activity is decreasing in some parts of the US, but remains high. Flu is expected to continue for some time. It's not too late to get vaccinated, visit www.ochalthinfo.com/flu for locations.

Influenza Update:

- **In the US:** The Southeast, which began experiencing high levels of flu activity at the end of November, is now showing declines. Influenza continues to be widespread in most states (including CA) and several indicators of flu activity remain elevated. The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) remains above the epidemic threshold for the second consecutive week. Nationwide, outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) were above the national baseline at 3.3% and were high in ten states, including CA (see map at right). Influenza A (H3N2), 2009 influenza A (H1N1), and B influenza viruses have all been identified this season, although the 2009 A H1N1 virus continues to predominate. The current flu vaccines have been a good match for circulating strains.
- **In California:** California continues to see high levels of influenza activity. ILI outpatient visits and P&I hospitalizations were above expected levels and influenza was isolated from more than 20% of clinical respiratory specimens.
- **In Orange County:** Outpatient visits for ILI remain elevated at 4%. Five new severe influenza (ICU/death) cases in persons under 65 years of age were reported this week, including 2 deaths. So far this season, 40 severe cases, including 10 deaths, have been reported.



- **Annual flu vaccine is the best way to prevent influenza and is recommended for everyone 6 months of age or older:** Get the facts about influenza vaccine. For a list of common misconceptions, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/misconceptions.htm#misconception-consent>
Vaccination is especially important for those who are overweight or obese, pregnant women, and those who are immunocompromised or have underlying medical conditions. Please note that pregnant women or people with pre-existing medical conditions do not need special permission or written consent from their doctor for influenza vaccination if they get vaccinated at a worksite clinic, pharmacy or other location outside of their physician's office.
- **Text messages may be effective at increasing vaccine uptake among pregnant women.** A randomized controlled trial of 1,187 low-income obstetric patients found that women who received text messages reminding them to get the flu vaccine were 30% more likely to be vaccinated than those who did not after adjusting for age and number of clinic visits. See *Am J Public Health* at: <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301620>
- **Antiviral treatment** is recommended as early as possible for any patient with confirmed or suspected influenza who (1) is hospitalized (2) has severe, complicated, or progressive illness or (3) is at higher risk for influenza complications.
 - **Information for clinicians on antiviral treatment:** <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>
 - **High-risk conditions:** http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm
 - **IV zanamivir aqueous solution** is available only by enrollment in an ongoing clinical trial, or under an emergency investigational new drug (EIND) request to the manufacturer for use in hospitalized adult and pediatric patients with severe influenza who cannot tolerate or absorb oseltamivir. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/intravenous-antivirals.htm>

If you have any comments about this flyer, contact Sandra Okubo, MPH or Michele Cheung, MD at (714) 834-8180. To receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at epi@ochca.com.