



Eye on Influenza

November 3, 2008
Volume 5, Issue 2

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Influenza activity continues to be sporadic in Orange County; consider influenza in your patients with fever and/or respiratory symptoms and test for influenza. Information about testing for influenza is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/index.htm>. The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) is offering free flu vaccines for eligible groups at various locations throughout the county:

<http://www.ochca.com/Public/flu/index.htm>

- **Study finds that a universal approach to flu immunization decreases flu-related deaths and healthcare visits.** In 2000, Ontario began offering free seasonal influenza vaccine to all persons over 6 months of age. Subsequently, Canadian researchers compared universal versus targeted vaccination (used in other provinces), for all 10 provinces by analyzing hospitalization and mortality data from 1997 to 2004. In Ontario, influenza vaccination rates for those aged 12 and older increased and hospitalization, emergency department use, and outpatient visits decreased overall when compared to other provinces. Influenza-related mortality decreased in Ontario (74% compared to 57% in other provinces), but a statistically significant decrease was seen only in those aged 85 or older. The researchers concluded that universal vaccination may be an effective strategy for increasing a population's protection against seasonal influenza, including protecting seniors
<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/oct2908ontario.html>.
- **Influenza A/H1N1 virus resistance to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) continues to increase in many areas.** In South Africa, 100% of the 225 A/H1N1 isolates tested for oseltamivir resistance were found to be resistant by genotypic analysis. WHO continues to receive reports of oseltamivir resistance in northern hemisphere countries, including the United States. To see a list of countries reporting resistance, visit <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/H1N1200801013.pdf>.
- **Promising phase II trial results for new antiviral flu drug.** A single dose of peramivir, an injectable neuraminidase inhibitor, when given within 48 hours of symptom onset, was found to reduce the duration of symptoms of influenza-positive outpatients by about 22 hours when compared with a placebo group. Hospitalized patients with serious influenza illness treated with oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or peramivir for 5 days had similar outcomes. To read more, visit <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/oct3108peramivir.html>.
- **University of Minnesota breaks Guinness world record for seasonal flu vaccine administered in a single day.** 11,358 doses were administered at four campus locations. For more info, visit <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/oct3008record.html>.
- **Revised WHO pandemic influenza preparedness plan open for comment until November 7.** Some of the changes include "simpler and more precise" definitions of the six pandemic phases with more emphasis on the social and economic effects of a global epidemic. The phases have been regrouped to emphasize planning and preparedness considerations. WHO plans to publish the final version in December. See http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/EN_guidancereview/en/index.html or <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/biz-plan/news/oct2408who.html>.



2008 Point of Distribution Exercise

- HCA will partner with city and community response agencies to offer **free seasonal flu shots** to the public on **Friday, November 7, 2008, from 11:30am to 2:00 pm** at Magnolia Baptist Church (Anaheim) and Irvine Valley College. For more information, see http://healthdisasteroc.org/events/Free_Flu_Shots.htm.



Orange County, California, and U.S. **

- To date, four influenza cases have been reported in OC for the 2008-09 season; 2 A & 2 B. One of the influenza A viruses was subtyped as A/H1.
- As of October 25, 2008, sporadic influenza cases have been reported in 13 states, including California. Overall influenza activity remains low in the U.S. with no states reporting regional or widespread activity.

**Note: The number of reported cases does NOT correspond to the total number of cases occurring in OC as not all labs participate, the surveillance programs are not population based, and testing may be influenced by many factors such as public interest. However, the trends in influenza activity are likely to be reflected accurately.

If you have any comments about this flyer, contact Alina Burgi or Pamela Hipp at (714) 834-8180. To receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at epi@ochca.com.