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**Influenza activity remains sporadic in Orange County; consider influenza in your patients with fever and/or respiratory symptoms and test for influenza. The Orange County Health Care Agency is offering free flu vaccines for eligible groups: <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/Public/flu/index.htm>.**

- **Promising results during phase I clinical trial for “universal” flu A vaccine.** The M2e universal flu A vaccine targets the M2 protein of influenza A viruses, a surface protein that differs little among different strains of type A, and therefore would reduce or eliminate the need to change the vaccine every year. Existing influenza vaccines target the surface protein hemagglutinin, which often mutates. During the phase I trial, one of four doses (0.3, 1.0, 3.0, and 10.0 micrograms (mcg)) of the vaccine or placebo were administered in two injections to 60 healthy volunteers between the ages of 18 and 49 years. The two lowest doses were safe and well-tolerated in all the volunteers yielding an immune response in 18 of 24 volunteers after the first dose and in 23 of 24 after two doses. Because the two highest doses were associated with the presence of flu-like symptoms in some of the subjects, development and clinical evaluation of the vaccine will continue at doses of 1.0 mcg and less. A second generation universal influenza vaccine is also being developed that targets a conserved antigen in B viruses as well as the M2 protein, to address both influenza A and B strains. See <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/nov1108flushot.html>.
- **Google plans to estimate influenza activity daily within the United States.** The internet search company unveiled a new system called Google Flu Trends that it says will estimate daily flu activity based on the volume of internet searches for information about flu. Last year, Google found that flu searches closely correlated with CDC’s influenza-like illness (ILI) reports, both regionally and nationally. Because the data predicted flu activity up to two weeks before official reports did, Google suggests the system may provide an early-warning for outbreaks of influenza. CDC says it plans to monitor Google’s data closely. Visit <http://www.google.org/about/flutrends/how.html> or <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/nov1308google-jw.html>.
- **CDC updates advice for persons traveling to H5N1-affected countries in the latest Outbreak Notice.** Prior to travel, CDC recommends visiting a travel medicine specialist, getting up-to-date on vaccinations, both routine (e.g. influenza) and travel-related, packing a travel kit with first aid supplies, and knowing where healthcare resources near your destination are located. During travel, CDC advises travelers to avoid direct and indirect contact with birds, eat only thoroughly cooked bird products, practice good hygiene to reduce the spread of germs, and seek medical care if illness arises. In addition, CDC recommends that travelers closely monitor their health for seven days after returning and seek medical care if fever and a cough, sore throat, or trouble breathing develops. See [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentAvianFluAsia.aspx?s\\_cid=ccu111008\\_Travelers1](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentAvianFluAsia.aspx?s_cid=ccu111008_Travelers1).
- **Federal officials conduct full-scale tabletop exercise at Miami’s International Airport to test the risk-based border strategy** developed to slow the spread of a flu pandemic across U.S. borders. The plan involves screening international air passengers to gauge illness and/or possible exposure to the virus. <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/nov1208airport.html>.



### Avian Influenza Update

- No new human H5N1 cases have been reported by the WHO since Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>. For the latest WHO H5N1 updates, see [www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/).

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

- To date this season, five influenza reports have been received in OC; 2 A & 3 B. One of the influenza A viruses was subtyped as A/H1.
- Influenza activity in California remains sporadic. Overall influenza activity remains low in the U.S. with no states reporting regional or widespread activity.

#### Recommended Resources

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>;  
 OC: <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/flu/surveillance.htm>;  
 CA: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/VRDL/html/FLU/Fluintro.htm>;  
 HHS: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>; General: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

\*\*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](mailto:epi@ochca.com).