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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>.

- **School-based flu immunization programs may be an efficient way to improve vaccination rates in children.** With the new recommendation this season to vaccinate all school-age children against influenza, experts are weighing options relating to school-based immunization programs. See http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/nov1908schools_ms.html.
- **Novel influenza virus infection detected in a Texas resident – swine flu.** One case of human infection with a swine influenza A/H1N1 virus was reported in a person who had several swine exposures—including close contact with an ill pig—prior to onset. Human infection with swine influenza is uncommon and sporadic human cases of in recent years have not resulted in sustained human-to-human transmission or community outbreaks. However, changes in swine influenza viruses can occur and immunity to swine H1N1 viruses is low in the general human population, so reports of human cases are closely monitored for further transmission. For more information on swine flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/>.
- **Hospital pandemic influenza drill shows a far greater need for basic PPE than expected.** Based on the drill, use of aprons, gloves, and masks would increase 13-fold, 10-fold, and 450-fold, respectively, above normal levels during the height of a pandemic. Waste generated from the increased basic PPE usage was 3-times the normal amount. Quantities of high-level PPE (gowns, respirators, goggles) used were much lower than expected. Although this drill was conducted in the United Kingdom, the findings may be useful for U.S. planning efforts. For a summary of findings and link to the abstract preview, see: http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/nov_2508ppe-jw.html.
- **Canadian study suggests N95 respirator fit testing and training alone does not ensure correct respirator use later on.** In a sample of health care workers with no prior respirator fit testing or training, 44% were able to don the N95s properly without receiving instructions. Fit test pass rates rose to 74% immediately after they received training; pass rates dropped to 47%-65% at 3 and 14 months post-training for those who did not receive training or routinely use N95s in the interim, but rose to 87-100% in those who did. The abstract is available at: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/591860?prevSearch=%28Respirator-fit%29+AND+%5Bjournal%3A+iche%5D>
- **Recent studies indicate foxes and raccoons could play a role in the spread of influenza viruses.** Red foxes fed H5N1-infected bird carcasses can excrete the virus without developing severe disease, thereby potentially playing a role in virus dispersal: <http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/12/1835.htm>. Wild raccoons were found to be susceptible to avian and human influenza A viruses, to shed and transmit virus to uninfected animals, and to seroconvert. Animals that can be co-infected with multiple subtypes of influenza increase the potential for development of novel strains through genetic reassortment: <http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/12/1842.htm>.



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

- To date this season, 7 influenza reports have been received in OC: 4 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.

**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.

Avian Influenza Update

- No new human H5N1 cases have been reported by the WHO since Sept. 10th. For the latest WHO H5N1 updates, see www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/.

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>

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