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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>.**

- **Influenza A/H1N1 antiviral resistance update.** Due to low levels of influenza activity in the U.S. so far this season, very few virus specimens have been available for testing. However, early and limited testing data for this season shows an increase in the proportion of flu A/H1N1 viruses that are resistant to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) compared to last season. The U.S. increase parallels an increasing proportion of resistant H1N1 viruses in other regions of the world. There is no evidence that the resistant viruses are causing more severe illness or are transmitted differently than other influenza viruses. CDC has issued interim guidance for health care providers on which antiviral medications to use, see: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm>.
- **Health & Human Services (HHS) issues new guidance for use and stockpiling of antiviral drugs for pandemic influenza; emphasis on employer responsibility.** HHS places responsibility on employers to have adequate supplies and plans for ensuring workers who could have direct contact with ill persons (health care workers, certain emergency services personnel) will receive antiviral drugs *before* exposure and throughout a pandemic. The new guidance also includes recommendations for key groups to receive antivirals *after* exposure: health care and emergency services workers who would not routinely have contact with ill persons, residents of group settings (nursing homes, prisons), and those with weakened immune systems. Government antiviral stockpiles, as in previous guidance, will be intended primarily for treatment of those already ill as a means of slowing pandemic disease spread. Synopsis of the new guidance: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/12/20081216a.html>. Full text of antiviral use guidance: [http://www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/antiviral\\_use.html](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/antiviral_use.html). Full text of stockpiling guidance: [http://www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/antiviral\\_employers.html](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/antiviral_employers.html).
- **Avian influenza vaccine clinical trial in children finds it is safe and immunogenic.** (Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal. 27(12):1052-1056, December 2008). Twelve healthy children, ages 9-17 years, were given one injection of an inactivated whole virus influenza A (H5N1) vaccine called Fluval. After 21 days, 75% of the test subjects had seroconverted (produced a detectable antibody response) and 75% were seroprotected (produced sufficient antibody levels for protection). No side effects were observed. Similar results have been found in clinical trials of the same vaccine on adults; trials on elderly subjects are underway. The abstract is available at <http://www.pidj.com> (go to Archive, December 2008 issue).
- **Travel to Asia for Lunar New Year – tips for avoiding avian influenza and other health issues.** The Year of the Water Buffalo begins on January 26, 2009. CDC has issued safety tips specific to travel to Asia: [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentLunarNewYear09.aspx?s\\_cid=ccu122208\\_LunarNewYear\\_e](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentLunarNewYear09.aspx?s_cid=ccu122208_LunarNewYear_e).

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

- To date this season, 13 influenza reports have been received in OC: 8 flu A (3 subtyped as A/H1, 5 not subtyped), 3 flu B, and 2 flu A/B unspecified.
- Influenza activity in California remains sporadic. Overall influenza activity remains low in the U.S. with no states reporting regional or widespread activity.



## Avian Influenza Update

- One new human H5N1 case has been reported in Egypt since the last update. The cumulative number of cases for 2003-2008 is now 391, with a mortality rate of 63%. For the latest WHO H5N1 updates, see [www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/).

\*\*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.

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