

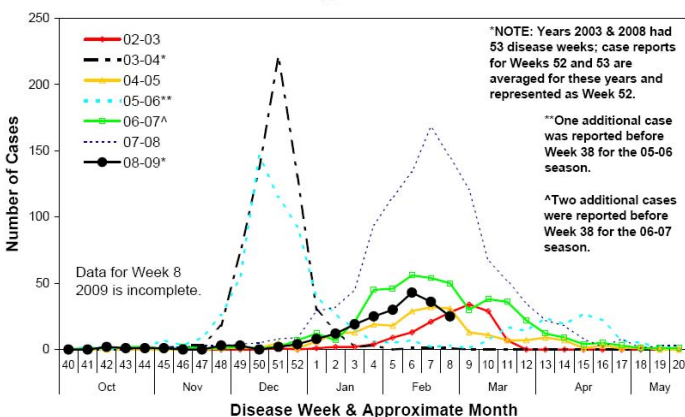


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It's not too late to vaccinate! Influenza activity is increasing throughout the U.S. Free flu vaccine for eligible groups is still available: www.ohealthinfo.com/Public/flu/index.htm.

- **Rise in pediatric influenza deaths mirrors increase in influenza activity.** CDC reported an increase in pediatric flu deaths over the past few weeks; 60% of the 17 cases this season have had bacterial coinfections, in particular with *Staphylococcus aureus*. CDC recommends that all children aged 6 months and over get vaccinated against influenza annually.
- **FDA panel makes recommendations on influenza strains for 2009-2010 vaccine.** Following the lead of the WHO, a FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee has recommended that the influenza A H1N1 and H3N2 strains for the Northern Hemisphere 2009-2010 vaccine remain the same as for 2008-09 and the B strain (currently from the Yamagata lineage) be replaced by one from the Victoria lineage (B/Brisbane/60/2008-like). See www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/feb1809selection.html.
- **Intradermal influenza vaccine approved in Europe.** The first injected flu vaccine to be given by a shallow needle prick into the skin (intradermal, ID) instead of into the muscle (IM) was approved for use in adults, including those over age 60. According to the manufacturer, potential advantages of this method of vaccine delivery include ease of administration, comfort, and a stronger immune response due to the high concentration of specialized immune cells in the dermal skin layer. A similar ID version of the US-licensed vaccine Fluzone is currently in phase 3 trials. See www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/general/news/feb2609sanofi.html.
- **Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) identified able to neutralize both H5N1 and seasonal influenza strains.** Researchers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute have identified mAbs that were active against H5N1 as well as other known flu A viruses including the 1918 pandemic and seasonal H1 strains. If safe and effective in humans, the mAbs could potentially be useful to treat and prevent influenza during an outbreak or pandemic. Researchers also identified a highly conserved region in the neck of the hemagglutinin protein that could be used as a target for a universal flu vaccine. See NIAID press release: www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-02/nioa-sil021909.php.
- **Avian influenza update:** Five new human H5N1 cases have been reported since the last update: China (1), Egypt (2), Vietnam (2). The cumulative number of cases for 2003-08 is 408, with 63% mortality. For updates from the WHO, see www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/.
- **Allocating scarce resources during a pandemic.** Report from Minnesota expert panel open for public comment until 3/16/09. See www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2009/pandemic013009.html.
- **HHS webcasts on pandemic planning.** 2/18 webcast was on mental health planning. 3/18 webcast is on air travel and border screening. See http://pandemicflu.gov/news/panflu_webinar.html.

Reported Influenza Cases by Week and Season, Orange County, 2002-2009



**Note: The number of reported cases does NOT correspond to the total number of cases occurring in OC as not all hospitals/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.

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

- 219 influenza reports have been received in OC: 65% flu A (of which 35% were H1, 11% H3, 54% not subtyped), 11% flu B, and 25% flu A/B unspecified.
- Overall flu activity is increasing in the US and has been upgrade from local to regional in CA.
- Circulating A/H1 and H3 strains appear to be matching this season's vaccine, but 71% of the B strains characterized are of the Victoria lineage not in the vaccine. 99% of H1N1 strains tested have been resistant to oseltamivir (Tamiflu®).

SAVE THE DATE! A Pandemic Influenza and Hospital Surge Tabletop Exercise will be held on Thursday, March 26th. For more information, see <http://healthdisasteroc.org/registration/surgetabletop/index.htm>.

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.