

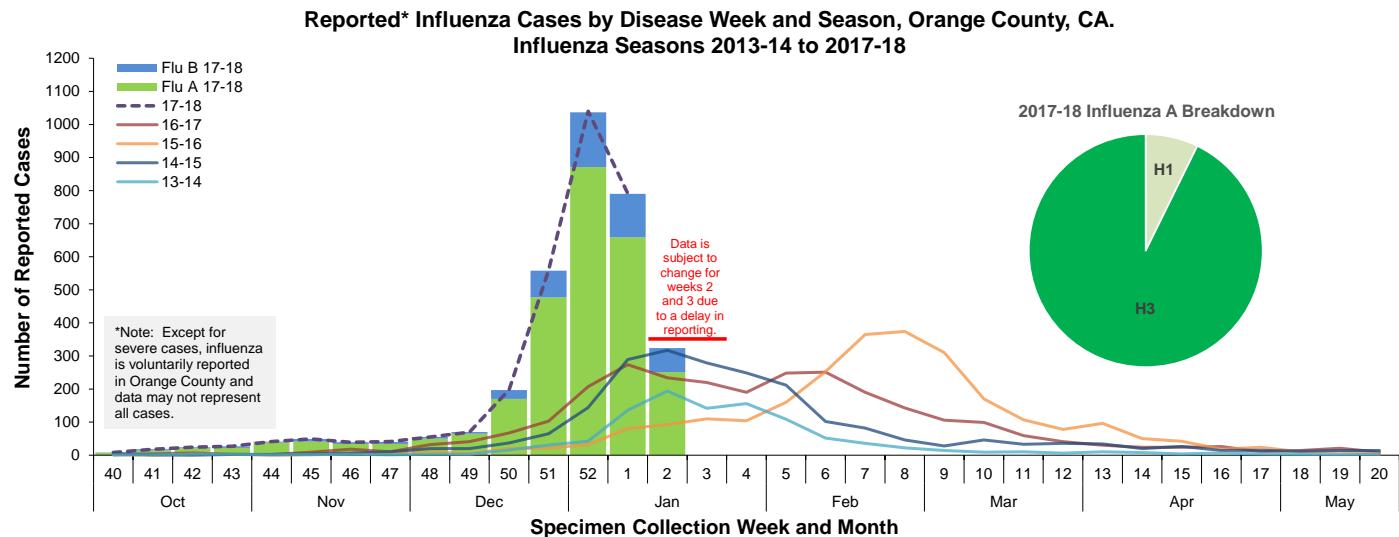
Eye on Influenza

Updates on Influenza in Orange County

January 19, 2018 Volume 5

Severe Cases of Influenza Continue to be Reported in Orange County

Current Situation: Although influenza activity has decreased in the past few weeks, overall activity in Orange County continues to be elevated and influenza strains are expected to circulate for several more weeks to months. To date, 35 severe cases of severe influenza (less than 65 years of age and hospitalized in intensive care or who died) have been reported in Orange County, with seven deaths. Influenza A/H3 continues to be the most frequently identified influenza virus by Orange County Public Health Laboratory so far in the season.



Take three actions to fight influenza:

1. Every year, people six months and older should get an influenza vaccine (shot). If you have not received the vaccine yet, now is the time to get it – it is not too late.
2. Avoid close contact with sick people, and if you are sick with flu, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without fever-reducing medications), except to get medical care. Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
3. If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can be used to treat illness. For people with high-risk factors (kids under 5 years, adults over 65 years, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions, and residents of long-term care facilities), treatment with an antiviral drug can mean the difference between having a milder illness versus a very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay.

Access to antiviral medications to treat influenza: There is no statewide or national shortage of antivirals.

See www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/supply for more information. **For patients in the Medi-Cal program:**

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) encourages Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans to review current policies regarding access to antiviral medications for influenza and investigate ways to reduce treatment barriers. DHCS also reminds all Fee-for-Service Medi-Cal providers that all brands of the recommended antiviral drugs to treat influenza, including oseltamivir, do not require prior authorization and may be billed directly without a Treatment Authorization Request. For more information, please visit: http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdocs/newsroom/newsroom_26620.asp