



2017-18 INFLUENZA SEASON UPDATE

County of Santa Cruz ~ Public Health Division

www.santacruzhealth.org/flu

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Public Health
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Santa Cruz County

This is a follow-up report to further emphasize that this flu season seems to be unusually early and severe. While flu is unpredictable, and it is difficult to know whether the peak has passed or is yet to increase, we want to encourage providers to be prepared for the latter. Please promote VACCINATION, TREATMENT, and INFECTION CONTROL. Here are the recent data trends to help support the need for increased response.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ¹

Flu activity in Santa Cruz County is significantly increasing, and in the last week of December it was substantially higher than during any other week in the past five years, according to sentinel provider reports of influenza-like illness (ILI) visits to the outpatient clinics (Figure 1).

There has also been an increase in reportable events:

- ICU cases among persons under age 65,
- Deaths among persons under age 65, and
- Outbreaks of ILI

As of week 2, there have already been 2 deaths among persons under 65, compared to zero deaths as of week 2 in the prior season (Table 1). In fact, the total number of deaths was 2 during the entire 2016-17 flu season. Deaths of more elderly persons also appear to be very high.

VACCINATION

Although the vaccine efficacy is predicted to be less than 50%, it is still recommended and considered more effective than not being vaccinated. Estimates of efficacy are not expected to be available until February at the earliest. Also, the vaccine takes 14 days to be effective, so getting patients and staff vaccinated sooner is preferable.

ANTIVIRALS

Even though antivirals are most effective when dispensed within 48 hours of onset of symptoms, given the severity of flu morbidity and mortality, antivirals should not be withheld just because it has been more than 48 hours. There is no shortage of antivirals, according to the manufacturer. Learn more at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>

INFECTION CONTROL

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette is very important for helping prevent transmission of all respiratory infections, e.g., visual alerts asking patients and visitors to inform health care personnel of respiratory symptoms when they first register for care. For more information, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphgiene.htm>

SOURCES

1. Santa Cruz County Public Health Division; Communicable Disease Unit (Unpublished Data, current as of 1/12/2018).

Figure 1: Weekly Percentage of Outpatient Clinic Visits that Were for Influenza-Like Illness, Santa Cruz County Sentinel Providers, 2013-14 to 2017-18 (as of Week 52)

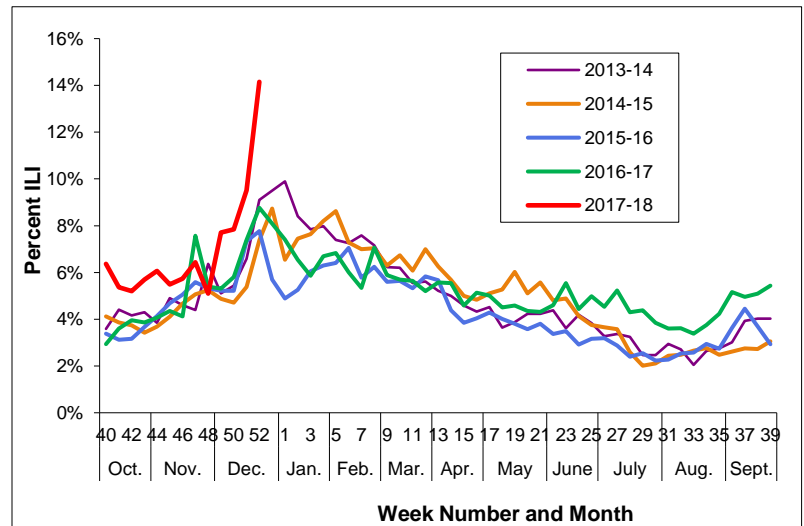


Table 1: Number of Reported Influenza-Related Conditions as of Week 2, Santa Cruz County Residents, 2016/17 and 2017/18 Flu Seasons ¹

Reportable Conditions	2016/17 Flu Season	2017/18 Flu Season
ICU hospitalization of persons with influenza ages 0-64 years	2	7
Deaths* from influenza among persons ages 0-64 years	0	2
Outbreaks of influenza	3	3

Week 2 ended 1/15 in 2017, and on 1/14 in 2018.

* Both deaths in 2017/18 were also in the ICU, so they are counted twice.