

10/4/2011

** NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

Recommendations for the 2011 – 2012 Influenza Season

Actions Requested:

- **Recommend influenza vaccine to all persons 6 months and older without contraindications in accordance with current ACIP recommendations*.**
 - **Report notifiable influenza cases to Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department at 360-786-5470 as follows**
 - **Laboratory-confirmed influenza deaths in persons of all ages (within 3 days).**
 - **Patients suspected to have a novel influenza virus such as avian influenza A (H5N1) virus (immediately).**
 - **Outbreaks of influenza-like illness or laboratory-confirmed influenza in an institutional setting (e.g., long term care facility) (immediately).**
 - **Unexplained critical illnesses or deaths in persons < 50 years old (immediately).**
- The Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WSPHL) will perform influenza testing free of charge for suspected influenza deaths.**

*Prevention and Control of Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, 2011: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6033a3.htm

Background:

Influenza activity remained very low in Washington throughout the summer with only rare sporadic infections detected. Although we expect influenza viruses to circulate in Washington this respiratory season, we cannot predict the intensity and timing of the influenza season. During the past several months, testing has identified three influenza viruses circulating in the world: influenza A (2009 H1N1), influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B. The viruses tested remain similar to the viruses chosen for the 2011-2012 flu vaccine. Antiviral resistance is low among circulating influenza viruses with surveillance for resistance ongoing. Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and Zanamivir (Relenza®) are the antiviral drugs recommended for use in the United States during the 2011–2012 influenza season.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its complications. The 2011-2012 U.S. seasonal influenza vaccine virus strains are identical to those contained in the 2010-2011 vaccine. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older as soon as vaccine is available. Children 6 months through 8 years of age who did not receive at least 1 dose of the 2010-11 seasonal influenza vaccine should receive 2 doses of the 2011-12 seasonal influenza vaccine (a minimum of 4 weeks apart).

Professional Resources:

Comprehensive information regarding the prevention and control of influenza with vaccines is available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/

Additional information on diagnostic testing, antiviral medication use, and infection control is available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/



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Surveillance Activities: Seasonal influenza surveillance is a collaborative effort between many partners with Thurston County partners participating in a number of the systems.

Public Health Reporting of Aggregate Influenza Data (PHRAID) system - Thurston County hospital labs contribute influenza and RSV testing data weekly.

Influenza Sentinel Laboratory Network - A Thurston County hospital lab submits deidentified positive influenza specimens to the WSPHL for subtyping.

ILINet Sentinel Providers (outpatient influenza-like illness Surveillance Network) - Two local health care providers voluntarily report weekly the number and age of patients seen with ILI (influenza-like illness) or a fever of $\geq 100^{\circ}$ F plus a cough or sore throat in the absence of a known cause other than influenza. If you are interested in becoming an ILINet Sentinel Provider, contact Jeanie at 360-867-2535 for enrollment information.

Public Health Lab Reportable Electronic Data (PHRED) system - Four large commercial labs electronically report positive influenza test results.

Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC) - Thurston County School Districts report daily absenteeism data.

Healthcare facilities, Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF), Schools, and other Community Settings – local facilities report illness outbreaks to this Department.

ESSENCE (Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics) is a Washington State system that reports syndromic data including ILI data daily, from 40 Washington hospital emergency departments. Mason General reports data to this system.

Washington State Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality (P&I) data is collected through the electronic death reporting system and analyzed to determine the weekly proportion of deaths due to pneumonia and influenza.

Surveillance Resources and Data: Information regarding flu activity will be available throughout the season at:

- www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/Epidemiology/CD/fluupdate.pdf (statewide data)
- www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/ (national data)

Thank you for continuing to report Notifiable Conditions. We couldn't do our part without you. Information is available at:
www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/personalhealth/communicabledisease/report.html

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting Non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
Day time immediately reportable conditions	360-867-2500 ask staff to locate Communicable Disease staff
After hours immediately and 24 hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency	Call 911 and ask staff to locate the Health Officer.
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is immediately notifiable	1-877-539-4344