

HEALTH ADVISORY



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

REGION IV PUBLIC HEALTH

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum
counties and Cowlitz Tribe

TO: Physicians and other Healthcare Providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH

Clark County Public Health, (360) 397-8412

Skamania County Community Health, (509) 427-3850

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, (360) 414-5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, (360) 795-6207

Alert categories:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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Influenza Circulates At Low Levels In Summer - Prompt antiviral treatment is crucial for some patient populations

Actions Requested

- **Be aware that influenza does circulate at low levels in summer.**
- **Washington State had a high number of lab-confirmed influenza deaths this year, with several of those deaths occurring in children.** See WA DOH influenza report: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/documents/5100/420-100-fluupdate.pdf>
- **Start patients on antiviral medications as early as possible (ideally within 48 hours of onset),** if indicated. See <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>
- **Antiviral treatment is recommended as early as possible in illness course for any patient with confirmed or suspected influenza who:**
 - Is hospitalized,
 - Has severe, complicated, or progressive illness, or
 - Is at higher risk for influenza complications. This list includes:
 - Children aged younger than 2 years
 - Adults aged 65 years and older
 - Persons with:
 - Chronic pulmonary conditions (including asthma)
 - Cardiovascular conditions (except hypertension alone)
 - Renal, hepatic, or hematological conditions (including sickle cell disease)
 - Metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
 - Neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions, including:
 - Disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, stroke, intellectual disability, moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injury
 - Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV infection
 - Women who are pregnant or postpartum (within 2 weeks after delivery)
 - Persons aged younger than 19 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
 - American Indians/Alaska Natives
 - Persons who are morbidly obese (i.e., body-mass index is equal to or greater than 40)
 - Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities

Antiviral treatment can also be considered on the basis of clinical judgement for suspected or confirmed influenza in previously healthy, symptomatic outpatients not at high risk especially if treatment can be initiated within 48 hours of illness onset.

- **Do NOT delay initiation of treatment while awaiting results of laboratory tests for influenza.** Be aware that rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) can provide false negative results.

For questions regarding influenza, please contact:

| LHJ | Phone | Fax |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Clark County Public Health: | (360) 397-8182 | (360) 397-8080 |
| Cowlitz County Health Department: | (360) 414-5599 | (360) 425-7531 |
| Skamania County Community Health: | (509) 427-3850 | (509) 427-0188 |
| Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services: | (360) 795-6207 | (360) 795-6143 |

Surveillance reports for Clark and Cowlitz counties: <https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/flu>

Thank you for your partnership.