

HEALTH ADVISORY



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

REGION IV PUBLIC HEALTH

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum
counties and Cowlitz Tribe

To: Physicians and other health care 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, 564.397.8412

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

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Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8412

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

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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 activity is increasing; active flu season has begun in Clark County



Summary

Influenza activity has been increasing in Clark and Cowlitz counties in recent weeks. For two consecutive weeks, influenza positivity has been above 10 percent in Clark County, signaling the start of active flu season. In Cowlitz County, influenza positivity has not yet surpassed 10 percent.

In week 48 (Nov. 24-30), Clark County influenza positivity increased to 17.98 percent. So far this season, influenza B is the predominant strain reported, accounting for 79 percent of positive influenza tests.

In Cowlitz County, influenza positivity was at 6 percent during week 48.

Recommendations

- **Vaccination:** Vaccination remains the best protection against influenza and is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Health care facilities should ensure all health care workers are vaccinated against influenza. Unvaccinated individuals are urged to consider vaccinations. (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/index.htm>)
- **Antiviral treatment:** Use prompt antiviral drug treatment for influenza infection in high-risk patients to minimize complications and need for hospitalization. Clinical benefit is greatest when antiviral treatment is administered early, especially within 48 hours of influenza illness onset. Full Influenza Antiviral Medications: Summary for Clinicians is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm>
- **Long-term care settings - vaccination, surveillance and outbreak control recommendations:** If possible, all residents should receive inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) annually before influenza season. However, even though influenza activity has already begun, unvaccinated residents should receive vaccine because the duration of the season is variable, and influenza activity might continue in February and March. For persons ≥ 65 years, any age-appropriate IIV formulation (standard-dose or high-dose, trivalent or quadrivalent, unadjuvanted or adjuvanted) or quadrivalent recombinant influenza vaccine are acceptable options. Please see <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm> for recommendations on surveillance, outbreak definition and chemoprophylaxis during outbreaks.
- **Minimize emergency department overcrowding:** Make all available efforts to manage low-acuity patients in outpatient settings, including when providing telephone triage

messages to patients. Expand office hours, staffing and outpatient clinic capacity to accommodate an increase in patients where possible.

Resources

Weekly influenza surveillance reports for Clark and Cowlitz counties are available on the [Clark County Public Health website](#).

Weekly statewide influenza surveillance reports are available on the [Washington State Department of Health website](#).

Thank you for your partnership.

Local health jurisdiction	Phone	Fax
Clark County Public Health	564.397.8182	564.397.8080
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