

HEALTH ALERT



Public Health
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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 office of:

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Health Officer

Clark County Public Health

Phone: (360) 397-8412

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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HEALTH ALERT

January 10, 2017

Influenza update – recommendations for providers in response to statewide surge in influenza cases.



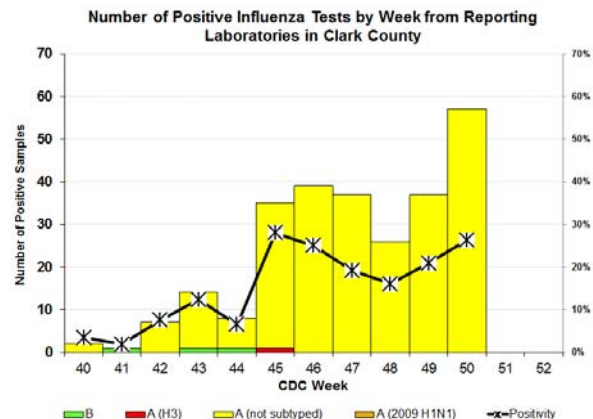
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Summary

This year's influenza activity in Washington State is geographically widespread and continues to increase, reaching epidemic levels according to the Department of Health. Similarly, the number of influenza cases in Clark County has been steadily increasing since early November.

As a result, Clark County has received several reports of influenza outbreaks in long-term care settings. As part of outbreak control measures, providers may receive requests for antiviral chemoprophylaxis or treatment for residents (and possibly staff) of long-term care facilities, and should be aware of the recommended dose and duration of each.

Additionally, hospitals along the I-5 corridor are reporting limited to no bed availability and the need to board patients in EDs and other locations. Several emergency departments are also experiencing large volumes of patients and long wait times. In order to prevent unnecessary visits to and overcrowding in our hospital emergency departments, patients are encouraged to seek medical assistance for flu like illness through their primary care provider or an urgency care facility if possible.



Recommendations

- ❑ **Vaccination:** remains the best protection against influenza and is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Healthcare facilities should ensure all healthcare workers are vaccinated against influenza. Unvaccinated individuals are urged to consider vaccinations (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6505a1.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>
- ❑ **Chemoprophylaxis during outbreaks in long-term care settings:** recommended for non-ill residents of long-term care facilities experiencing an influenza outbreak, regardless of vaccination status. CDC recommends a minimum of 2 weeks of antiviral chemoprophylaxis, continuing for at least 7 days after the last known case is identified. (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>)

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- ❑ **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

For weekly influenza updates visit:

- the Washington State Department of Health for statewide surveillance data and information (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/420-100-FluUpdate.pdf>).
- Clark County Public Health for local surveillance data (<https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/flu>).

Thank you for your partnership.

LHJ	Phone	Fax
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Skamania County Community Health:	(509) 427-3850	(509) 427-0188
Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services:	(360) 795-6207	(360) 795-6143

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