

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

INFLUENZA ACTIVITY UPDATE

JANUARY 2, 2018

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a Health Advisory about **seasonal influenza A (H3N2) activity**. Activity in the United States has increased significantly over recent weeks statewide.

The advisory was issued to:

- Remind clinicians that influenza should be high on their list of possible diagnoses for ill patients because influenza activity is increasing nationwide, and
- Advise clinicians that all hospitalized patients and all high-risk patients (either hospitalized or outpatient) with suspected influenza should be treated as soon as possible with a neuraminidase inhibitor antiviral. While antiviral drugs work best when treatment is started within 2 days of illness onset, clinical benefit has been observed even when treatment is initiated later.

Recommendations

- CDC recommends antiviral medications for treatment of influenza as an important adjunct to annual influenza vaccination. Treatment with neuraminidase inhibitors has been shown to have clinical and public health benefit in reducing illness and severe outcomes of influenza based on evidence from randomized controlled trials, meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials, and observational studies during past influenza seasons and during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.
- Any patient with suspected or confirmed influenza in **the following categories should be treated as soon as possible with a neuraminidase inhibitor**:
 - Any patient who is **hospitalized**—treatment is recommended for all hospitalized patients;
 - Any patient who has **severe, complicated, or progressive illness**—this may include outpatients with severe or prolonged progressive symptoms or who develop complications such as pneumonia but who are not hospitalized;
 - Any patient who is at **higher risk for influenza complications** but not hospitalized
- Clinical benefit is greatest when antiviral treatment is administered *as early as possible* after illness onset. Therefore, antiviral treatment should be started as soon as possible after illness onset and should not be delayed even for a few hours to wait for the results of testing. **Ideally, treatment should**

be initiated within 48 hours of symptom onset. However, antiviral treatment initiated later than 48 hours after illness onset can still be beneficial for some patients.

Enhanced Influenza Surveillance

Severe (ICU) and Fatal Cases

Riverside University Health System (RUHS)—Public Health is conducting enhanced surveillance for influenza. **Health care providers are requested to report ICU and fatal influenza cases** to Disease Control via fax at 951-358-5102 or CalREDIE. The number of reported ICU and flu associated deaths is posted on Disease Watch at <http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org/>. The weekly influenza surveillance report is also posted at this location. Samples from any positive influenza result that is not subtyped should be sent to the RUHS-Public Health Lab (PHL).

Pregnant and Pediatric Severe Cases

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Immunization Branch has requested local health departments collect additional seasonal influenza vaccine information for pregnant/postpartum women and pediatric severe influenza cases who were not vaccinated or with unknown vaccination status. Two supplemental forms were created, one for pediatric cases ≥ 6 months and another for pregnant and postpartum women (also to be used for pediatric cases less than 6 months). These forms are provider questionnaires, to be completed by health departments, and are designed to determine influenza vaccine status and/or reasons vaccine was not administered. This form is requested **for all ICU and fatal pregnant/postpartum women and pediatric cases who were not vaccinated or with unknown vaccination status**. Disease Control will contact the Infection Preventionist if additional information is needed to complete the form.

Positive Rapid Antigen Tests

Positive rapid antigen samples should be sent to the RUHS-PHL for typing. Please contact the lab at 951-358-5070 for questions on specimen submission. Disease Control can be reached at 951-358-5107 for questions on reporting requirements.

We appreciate your help in keeping all residents of Riverside County healthy.

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