



# FAMILIES

## FIGHTING FLU, INC.®

### WEEKLY FLU NEWS

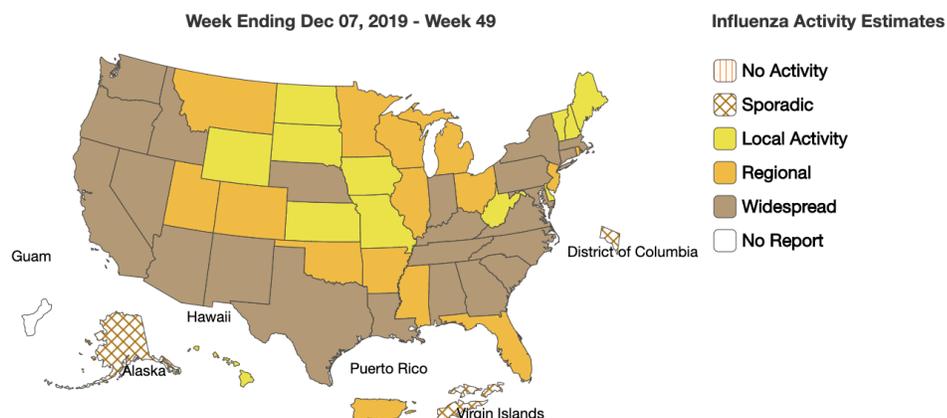
December 16, 2019



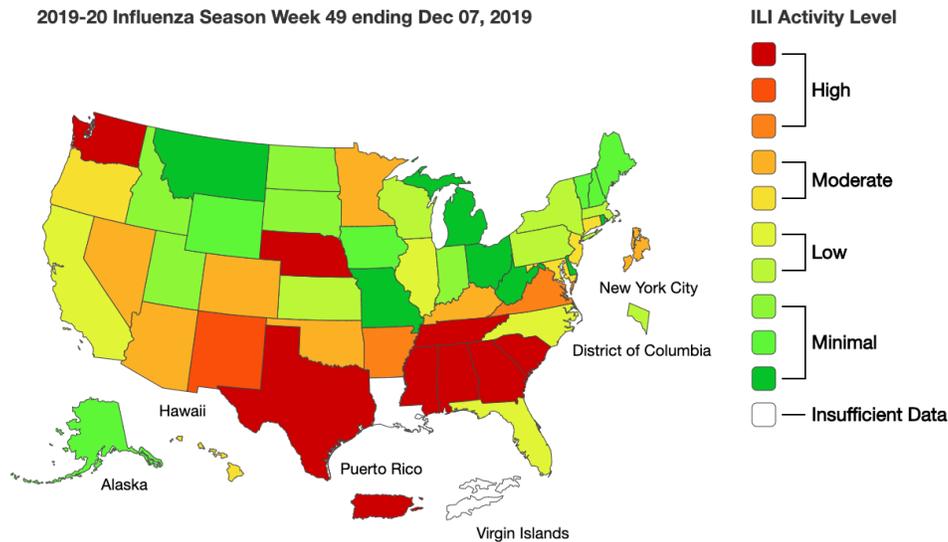
#### **CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 49, Ending Dec. 7, 2019**

Dec. 13, 2019; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Seasonal flu activity in the United States has been elevated for five weeks and continues to increase.
- 11.3% of specimens from clinical laboratories tested positive for influenza.
- Nationally, influenza B/Victoria viruses are most common followed by H1N1 and H3N2. Predominant viruses vary by region and age group.
- 3.2% of visits to a health care provider were for influenza-like illness, which is above the national baseline of 2.4%. Nine of 10 regions were at or above their baselines.
- The overall hospitalization rate is 3.9 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 5.0% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 6.4%.
- Four new pediatric flu deaths were reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 49. The total for the season is 10.



2019-20 Influenza Season Week 49 ending Dec 07, 2019



## 2019-2020 U.S. Flu Season: Preliminary Burden Estimates

Dec. 13, 2019, [CDC](#)

CDC estimates that, from October 1, 2019, through December 7, 2019, there have been:

- 2.6 million - 3.7 million flu illnesses
- 1.2 - 1.8 million flu medical visits
- 23,000 - 41,000 flu hospitalizations
- 1,300 - 3,300 flu deaths



## Only a quarter of U.S. childcare centers require kids to have flu shots

Dec. 12, 2019; [Reuters](#)

Only a quarter of childcare centers in the United States require children in their care to get a flu shot, and even fewer require childcare workers to be vaccinated, U.S. researchers reported on Thursday.

Young children are at increased risk of serious complications such as hospitalization and even death from seasonal influenza, but few centers charged with caring for young children require them to be immunized, Dr. Timothy Shope of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and colleagues report in the *Journal of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society*.

In the United States, nearly 1 in 4 children under age 5 attend large group childcare or preschool programs.



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## **First pediatric flu death confirmed in Maricopa County for 2019-2020 season**

**Dec. 10, 2019; [ABC15 Arizona](#)**

An infant under the age of six months has died due to influenza, according to the Maricopa County Department of Public Health.

Officials say the infant was not old enough to be immunized.

No child deaths from influenza were reported last season, according to officials. Three children died in 2017 in Maricopa County, but the ages are unknown.

Currently, a total of 935 flu cases have been reported to the department so far this season, which is approximately four times the amount that the county experienced in the previous season.

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## **Tamiflu set to switch to OTC status**

**Dec. 10, 2019; [PharmacyTimes](#)**

In July 2019, manufacturer Sanofi said it had signed a deal with Roche Pharmaceuticals to obtain exclusive OTC rights for the antiviral agent Tamiflu (oseltamivir phosphate), a neuraminidase inhibitor indicated for the treatment and prophylaxis of the influenza virus.

“The US market is the largest OTC market in the world, and a successful switch of Tamiflu to OTC would support our global cough and cold strategy by expanding into flu with a sustainable point of difference in the market,” Sanofi said in a statement.

The company has not announced an exact date of availability of OTC Tamiflu. Under the agreement, in addition to leading the FDA negotiations, Sanofi will head the clinical program and fund all studies needed to support the OTC switch in the United States in consultation with leading experts in the field. Tamiflu is currently sold in the United States by Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, for prescription use. Roche will continue to market Tamiflu in the rest of the world. Sanofi will retain the rights to first negotiations for switch rights in other select markets.

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## **Border agency says it's doing all it can to stop children from dying from flu. Others aren't so sure**

**Dec. 12, 2019; [CNN](#)**

Despite reassurances from the federal government, some members of Congress say they worry migrant children won't be safe from the flu this season.

In the last flu season, three children died of the flu while in the custody of US Customs and Border Protection.

As in many areas around the United States this year, the flu has made an early appearance along the Southwest border, with high levels of flu activity in Texas and Arizona.

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## **‘Worthwhile to consider’: Does the world need a pentavalent flu vaccine?**

**Dec. 10, 2019; [Healio](#)**

Study findings showed that last season’s influenza vaccine “offered no substantial protection” against H3N2 viruses that moved through the United States late in the season, highlighting the ongoing challenge of producing a vaccine that works against this influenza A subtype and leading two experts to wonder if an additional H3N2 strain should be added to the seasonal vaccine.

The emergence of a drifted H3N2 variant in the second half of the season prompted WHO to postpone choosing an H3N2 virus for the Northern Hemisphere’s 2019-2020 influenza vaccines, which ultimately led to a delay in some influenza vaccine shipments in the U.S.

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## **Seniors more protected by adjuvanted influenza vaccine**

**Dec. 11, 2019; [PrecisionVaccinations](#)**

New Jersey-based Seqirus announced the results from a clinical trial that showed Flud@, an adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (aTIV), was 6 percent more effective than standard non-adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV) in reducing the risk of all-cause hospitalizations.

And, this study found the Flud vaccine reduced hospitalization for influenza and pneumonia, in adults 65 years and older living in 823 USA nursing homes during the 2016-2017 influenza season by 20 percent.

Announced in a press release on December 9, 2019, this is important news given the low vaccine-effectiveness (VE) observed during this influenza study.

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## **Sanofi awarded \$226M to expand influenza vaccine production capabilities in Pennsylvania**

**Dec. 10, 2019; [Pennsylvania Business Report](#)**

Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines global business unit of Sanofi, recently entered into a contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to increase the company’s domestic pandemic influenza vaccine production capabilities based in Swiftwater, Pa.

The agreement is supported by \$226 million in federal funds from the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), which is part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at HHS.

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## **Flu season is off to an earlier-than-normal start, raising fears of a severe year**

**Dec. 9, 2019; [TIME](#)**

Flu season in the U.S. is off to an early start—which means a virulent winter may be impending.

Influenza activity has been higher than normal for four weeks in a row, which many experts consider the official mark of flu season. As of the week ending Nov. 30, 3.5% of visits to health care providers nationwide were related to influenza-like illness, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Already, the country has seen about 1.7 million cases of the flu, 16,000 flu-related hospitalizations and 910 flu-related deaths, the CDC says. Six children have died so far.

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## **The flu season started early this year. Is it connected to a rise in influenza type B?**

**Dec. 12, 2019; [USA Today](#)**

The 2019-2020 flu season in the USA has commenced and may be attributed to the early rise of influenza B – a strain of the virus that typically emerges toward the end of flu season.

Flu activity has been higher than normal for the past month, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and continues to rise. As of Nov. 30, 3.5% of visits to health care providers were due to influenza-like illnesses, considerably higher than the average national baseline of 2.2% but probably not the peak.

This flu season is the earliest this decade that the percentage of visits to health care providers associated with influenza-like illnesses is above the national baseline – the last time it exceeded the baseline this early, excluding 2009 during the H1N1 epidemic, was the 2003-2004 flu season, when an especially virulent strain of influenza A ravaged the USA.

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## #1 holiday hack:

When you buy your gifts  
at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com),  
Amazon donates.

**amazonsmile**

Holiday shopping? Choose Families Fighting Flu as a charity on AmazonSmile at no additional cost to you!



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