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## WEEKLY FLU NEWS

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**December 9, 2019**

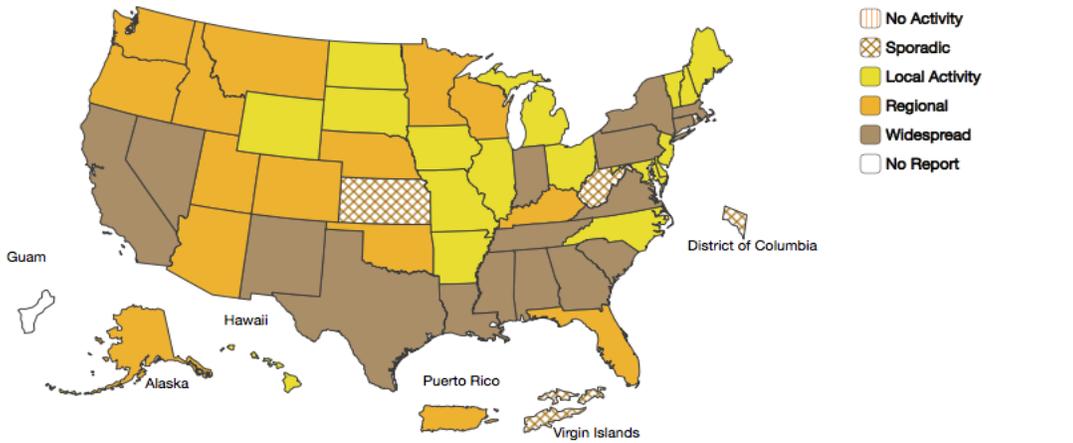


**CDC: Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report: Week 48, Ending Nov. 30, 2019**

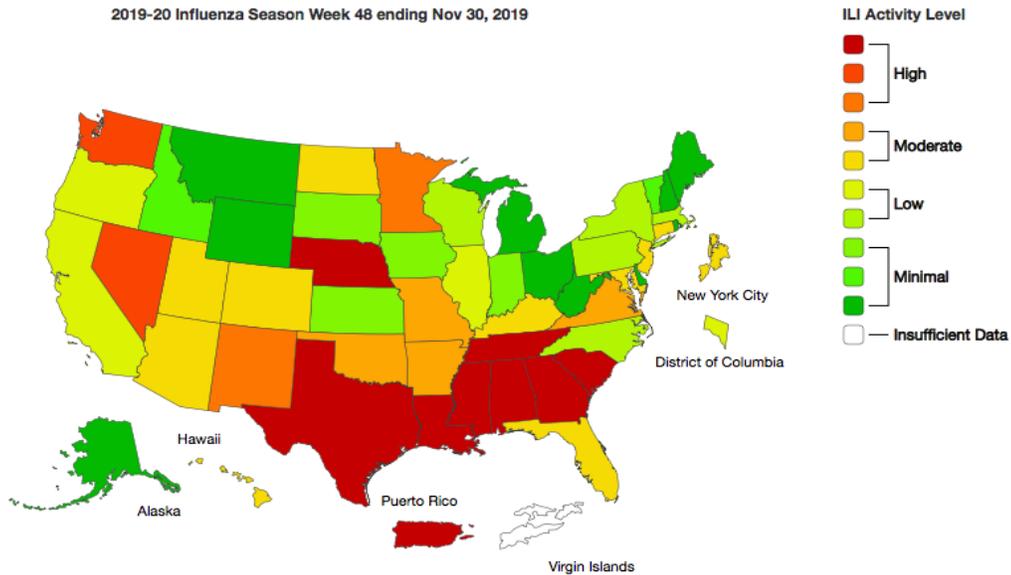
**Dec. 6, 2019; [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)**

- Seasonal flu activity in the United States has been elevated for four weeks and continues to increase.
- 10.2% 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.
- 3.5% 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.
- Overall hospitalization rate is 2.7 per 100,000, which is similar to past seasons at this time.
- 4.8% of deaths were attributed to pneumonia and influenza, which is below the epidemic threshold of 6.4%.
- One new pediatric flu death was reported for the 2019-2020 season during week 48. The total for the season is 6.

Week Ending Nov 30, 2019 - Week 48



2019-20 Influenza Season Week 48 ending Nov 30, 2019



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

Dec. 6, 2019, [CDC](#)

CDC estimates that, from October 1, 2019, through November 30, 2019, there have been:

- 1.7 million - 2.5 million flu illnesses
- 800,000 - 1.2 million flu medical visits
- 16,000 - 29,000 flu hospitalizations
- 910 - 2,400 flu deaths

**House Committee on Energy & Commerce: Hearing on "Flu season: U.S. public health preparedness and**



## response"

**Dec. 4, 2019; Washington, D.C.**

The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 10:30 a.m. in the John D. Dingell Room, 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

A recording of the hearing can be viewed [here](#). Witnesses included:

Nancy Messonnier, M.D. (CAPT, USPHS, RET)  
Director  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Anthony S. Fauci., M.D.  
Director  
National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases National Institutes of Health

Robert P. Kadlec, M.D., M.T.M.&H., M.S.  
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D.  
Director  
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research U.S. Food and Drug Administration



## National Influenza Vaccination Week focuses on preventing complications

**Dec. 6, 2019; Healio**

“Unfortunately, influenza infection is often just the beginning of the problem for patients with chronic health conditions. An often unrecognized danger of flu is that the resulting inflammation may last for several weeks after acute infection,” William Schaffner, MD, medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID), said in a press release. “This inflammation can worsen a patient’s underlying disease and may lead to complications like heart attack and stroke.”

An estimated 31% of U.S. adults aged 50 to 64 years and 47% of those aged at least 65 years have at least one chronic health condition that places them at a higher risk for influenza-related complications, according to a press release.



## Flu season off to a fast start, driven by unexpected virus, CDC says

**Dec. 7, 2019; NBC**

The U.S. winter flu season is off to its earliest start in more than 15 years.

An early barrage of illness in the South has begun to spread more broadly, and there's a decent chance flu season could peak much earlier than normal, health officials say.

The last flu season to rev up this early was in 2003-2004 — a bad one. Some experts think the early start may mean a lot of suffering is in store, but others say it's too early to tell.

“It really depends on what viruses are circulating. There's not a predictable trend as far as if it's early it's going to be more severe, or later, less severe,” said Scott Epperson, who tracks flu-like illnesses for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## **One hospital had 9 flu cases at this time last year. This year, it has more than 1,400**

**Dec. 3, 2019; [CNN](#)**

When Donna Bonin's 13-year-old son recently came down with a sky-high fever, she thought to herself: This can't be the flu. It's November.

But Bonin is an experienced mother of seven, and she'd never seen any of her children so sick. She brought Adrian to the emergency room at Children's Hospital New Orleans, where he was, indeed, diagnosed with influenza.

Adrian is in good company during what has proven to be an extraordinary fall for the flu in parts of the country, causing strain and long waits in the emergency room in some hospitals.

At Children's, they've seen more than 1,400 cases of the flu so far this season, compared to nine cases at this time last year.



## **Survey: 37 percent of Americans plan to skip flu vaccine this season**

**Dec. 3, 2019; [The Hill](#)**

Thirty-seven percent of American adults don't plan to get flu shots this season, according to a poll released Tuesday.

A survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago found those who don't plan to get shots have concerns about the side effects of the vaccine or think it doesn't work very well.

Others said they never get the flu, don't like needles or are concerned they will get the flu from the vaccine.

“Widespread misconceptions exist regarding the safety and efficacy of flu shots,” said Caitlin Oppenheimer, senior vice president of Public Health Research at NORC at the University of Chicago.

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## Study finds that a small rise in employment means a big rise in flu cases

Dec. 9, 2019; [Newsday](#)

While the tight labor market may be good news for the economy, the bustling employment picture could mean lots more flu will be going around, researchers said.

According to a study by researchers at Emory University, Ball State University and the University of Alabama-Birmingham, higher employment correlates with increased rates of flu transmission in the United States.

U.S. unemployment is at 3.5%, a 50-year low, according to the most recent figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The study, published in the August volume of *Economics & Human Biology*, found that a one percentage point increase in the employment rate correlated with a 16% increase in the number of influenza-related doctor visits. The trend was strongest in the retail and health care sectors, where interpersonal contact is most frequent.



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