

Microbe Monthly

Communicable Disease Report

November 2009

El Paso County Department
of Health & Environment

Influenza Update

Statewide, Colorado is experiencing a decrease in influenza-like-illness (ILI) over the past 3-4 weeks. Both influenza-related hospitalizations and ILI outpatient visits peaked mid-October and steadily decreased in late October and early November. In El Paso County, hospitalizations also peaked in mid-October and are decreasing (see graph). County-based data also shows that school absenteeism, emergency department visits for ILI, and clinic visits for ILI all are on the decline.

Although this wave of 2009 H1N1 flu is slowing, the degree of flu illness is still markedly abnormal for this time of year. The number of influenza-related hospitalizations reported between August 30 and November 7 (n=133), far exceeds the total hospitalizations for the entire 2008-09 flu season (Oct 08 to April 09, n=99). Uncertainty exists as to what will happen with flu activity once seasonal flu strains begin to circulate in the next few weeks. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment will provide strain typing data on a sample of patients with influenza-related hospitalizations to help estimate the burden of disease from 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu. We can expect, however, that once seasonal flu strains begin circulating, disease incidence rates will increase in persons ages 65 years and older. The disease incidence rates of 2009 H1N1 flu have been highest among the children and young adults.

The CDC is using a national survey tool in order to estimate the prevalence of ILI and the uptake of 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is the world's largest, on-going telephone health survey system, tracking health conditions and risk behaviors in the United States yearly since 1984. Colorado actively participates in BRFSS. This fall, BRFSS is gathering information about persons who reported they had a recent ILI and about persons getting either a seasonal flu or 2009 H1N1 vaccine. The following data reflects statewide survey responses to these questions collected between Oct. 1 to 25, 2009.

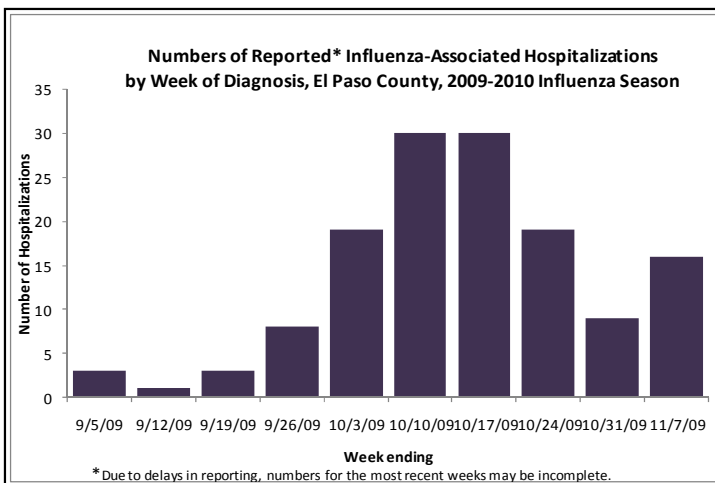
- Percent of persons who reported having a fever with sore throat and cough in the last month: 9.8% (statistical range 5.7 to 14.0%)
- Percent of persons who reported that they have received an H1N1 flu vaccine since September 2009: 2.5% (statistical range 0 to 6.7%)
- Percent of persons who reported that they have received either a seasonal flu shot or mist in the past 12 months: 42.3% (statistical range 35.9 to 48.7%). Among persons who received a seasonal flu shot, 38% received the vaccine during the 2008-09 flu season.

El Paso County Disease Trends

For the months of September and October 2009, 193 communicable disease cases were reported and investigated: campylobacter (4), cryptosporidiosis (1), encephalitis (1), giardia (5), hepatitis A (2), chronic hepatitis B (4), influenza-related hospitalizations (119), meningococcal disease (1), invasive group B strep (1), invasive pneumococcal disease (11), Salmonella (15), STEC (Shiga-toxin producing E. coli) (2), varicella (16) and viral meningitis (11).

During this time CD Program staff also investigated 4 outbreaks: 2 H1N1 (schools); and 2 GI illness (restaurant, wedding).

Most of the influenza related hospitalizations are tested with rapid flu tests (which do not specifically identify H1N1); however, H1N1 is the predominant flu virus circulating so these hospitalizations are likely attributed to H1N1.



Hot Topics—State and National

- Through July 2009, a total of 43,677 laboratory-confirmed cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza cases were reported in the United States, although this count underestimates the true burden of disease. Correcting for under-ascertainment using a multiplier model, it was estimated that 1.8 million-5.7 million cases occurred, including 9,000-21,000 hospitalizations. To view the full report in Emerging Infectious Diseases go to: www.cdc.gov/eid/content/15/12/pdfs/09-1413.pdf
- A recent Canadian study of critically ill patients with 2009 H1N1 influenza found these common co-morbidities among critically ill patients were lung disease, obesity, hypertension, and a history of smoking or diabetes. Females were also more likely to have serious disease. To view the full report in JAMA go to: jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/302/17/1872

Contact Information

CD/TB Program

Weekday Hours (M-Th)* 719-578-3220
After-Hours Emergency 719-385-9622

Immunizations

719-578-3272

Environmental Health

719-575-8636

***Note: Health Department regular hours are Monday—Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Weekday Hours (M-F) 303-692-2700
After-Hours 303-370-9395