



March 18, 2019

Increased Influenza Activity in Kitsap County

Actions Requested

- **Be aware that we are seeing an increase in influenza in Kitsap County and the U.S.** This is unusual for this time of year. Influenza A is predominating in Washington State so far this flu season. For more information about this flu season, view our current weekly Kitsap Respiratory Illness Report at <https://kitsappublichealth.org/Respiratory.pdf>.
- **Start antiviral treatment as close to illness onset as possible if influenza is suspected in those at risk of complications**, ideally within 48 hours of onset. **Do not delay treatment** for even a few hours while waiting for test results to come back.
- **Administer influenza vaccine to all eligible individuals, and especially high-risk groups or those that care for people in high-risk groups** (see list of high risk groups below). People aged 65 and older are recommended to have the high-dose flu vaccine. Below is a link to a list of contraindications and precautions.
- **Instruct individuals with influenza-like symptoms to stay home, and away from people who may be at higher risk for influenza complications, for at least 24 hours after their fever has resolved without fever-reducing medications.**
- **Report influenza-related deaths, influenza infections in residents of long-term care facilities, and novel or unsubtypeable strains of influenza** to Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD) by calling (360) 728-2235.
- **Subscribe to the Kitsap Respiratory Illness Report** at www.kitsappublichealth.org/subscribe for updates on local influenza activity.

For questions, please contact our Communicable Disease staff at (360) 728-2235.

Background

Washington State and Kitsap County typically see a decline in flu cases in March; however, this year we are seeing an increase in influenza activity over recent weeks with influenza A. Kitsap County is seeing increases in positive influenza lab tests, emergency room visits for ILI, and school absenteeism. Neighboring counties are also experiencing similar trends.

It is too early for extensive details regarding the influenza typology or vaccine effectiveness in Kitsap County. Preliminary data from the CDC through February 2, 2019 indicate that this season's flu vaccine has been approximately 47% effective at preventing medically-attended laboratory-confirmed influenza infection.

People who are at higher risk for influenza complications:

Any patient who is hospitalized; any patient who has severe, complicated, or progressive illness; persons with chronic illness/health problems; children younger than 2 years; adults aged 65 years and older; persons with immunosuppression; women who are pregnant or postpartum; people aged younger than 19 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy; people with extreme obesity; residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities; American Indians/Alaska Natives.

Resources

CDC Influenza Vaccine Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/rr6602a1.htm>

CDC 2018-2019 Influenza Season: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/current.htm>

CDC Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness, 2004-2018: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/effectiveness-studies.htm>

Interim Estimates of 2018–19 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness — United States, February 2019.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6806a2.htm>

Guide to Contraindications and Precautions to Commonly Used Vaccines: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3072A.pdf>

KPHD Respiratory Illness Report: <http://www.kitsappublichealth.org/Respiratory.pdf?pdf=Respiratory-Report>