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<http://www.akepi.org>

Influenza Update

Surveillance and Revised Vaccination Recommendations

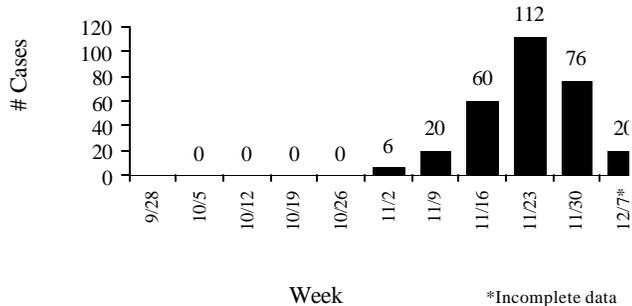
Introduction

This *Bulletin* updates information about influenza activity and vaccine usage, based on new guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹ Please see *Epidemiology Bulletin* No. 35, "Influenza Update, December 2003: Influenza Vaccine Shortage" which discusses the influenza vaccine shortage and earlier recommendations for vaccine use.

Influenza Surveillance Update

Laboratory surveillance: As of 12/11/2003, a total of 300 laboratory-confirmed cases have been reported to the Section of Epidemiology. The Alaska State Public Health Laboratories-Fairbanks (ASPHL-F) has cultured 44 influenza A (H3) isolates from Anchorage, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Ketchikan, Kotzebue, Nome, and Sitka. Final identification of the influenza A (H3) strain is pending at the World Health Organization reference laboratory in Atlanta, GA. In addition, 256 positive rapid antigen tests for influenza A and B have been reported (Figure).

Alaska Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza Cases
(N=300)



Influenza-like Illness Surveillance (ILI): For the week ending December 6, of the providers who reported, 10.6% of health care visits were due to ILI. This is a two-fold increase from the previous week when 4.5% of visits were due to ILI.

Alaska influenza laboratory and ILI surveillance reports are updated weekly at:

<http://www.akepi.org/id/influenza/influenza.htm>.

Reference :

1. CDC. Update: Influenza Activity – United States, 2003-04 Season. *MMWR* 2003; 52(490):1197-1202.

(Acknowledgement: Many thanks to all public and private health care providers around the State who have reported influenza, administered vaccine to protect Alaskans at greatest risk for influenza complications, and assisted the Alaska Immunization Program in locating and redistributing influenza vaccine.)

Influenza Vaccine Shortage -Vaccine Redistribution

The Alaska Immunization Program has worked with public and private providers throughout the State to redistribute 1100 doses of 0.5 ml and 220 pediatric formulation inactivated vaccine. Redistributed vaccine has been shipped to regional public health centers.

Revised Recommendations for Influenza Prevention

- Administer remaining inactivated influenza vaccine **only** to persons at highest risk for the complications of influenza. **High risk persons** are:
 - All children aged 6-23 months of age;
 - Adults ≥ 65 years of age;
 - Those ≥ 2 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;
 - Pregnant women in their second or third trimester.
- Vaccinate all children at high risk, including all children 6-23 months of age, with a first or second dose. **Doses of vaccine should not be held in reserve to ensure that two doses will be available.****
- Encourage and assist persons at high risk to search locally for vaccine if their usual health care provider no longer has vaccine available. Resources to locate remaining vaccine include:
 - Local public health centers where redistributed vaccine may be available (<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/nursing/locations.htm>).
 - Section of Epidemiology at 907-269-8000.
- Encourage measures to decrease transmission:
 - Stay home if you have fever, sore throat and cough;
 - Wash your hands frequently;
 - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing;
 - Don't share items contaminated with respiratory secretions;
 - Disinfect frequently touched surfaces with a household cleaner or bleach solution (1/4 cup bleach in 1 gallon of water).
- Consider using the live, attenuated influenza vaccine, Flumist™ for health persons age 5-49 years. The AK Immunization Program does not supply Flumist™.
- Consider antiviral medications with specific activity against influenza A viruses for treatment or chemoprophylaxis for influenza A, especially in persons at high risk for complications from influenza.

** This replaces the recommendation made in *Bulletin* No. 35. On December 11, 2003, the CDC provided additional guidance which supercedes our previous recommendation to reserve a second dose of vaccine for children 6-23 months old.¹