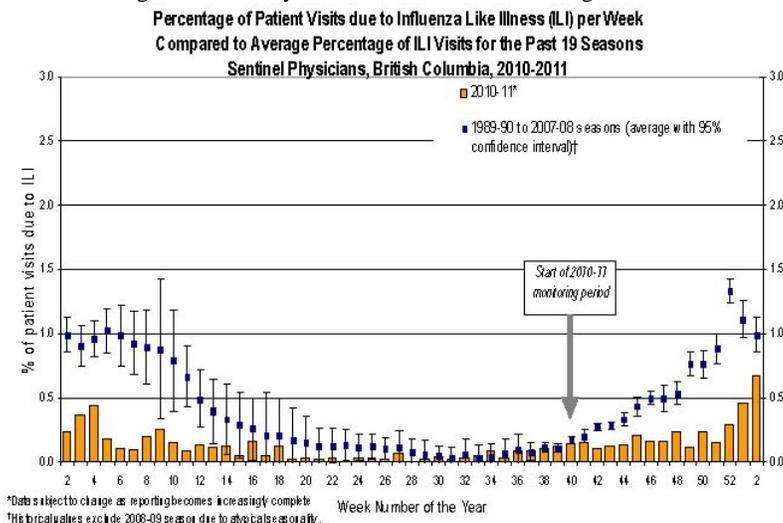


Influenza Bulletin

Influenza Activity in British Columbia

The number of influenza-related visits to sentinel physicians in British Columbia (Figure 1) has been and remains below historic levels. Of the 30 influenza isolates in the past week, 15 were A/H1N1, 6 were A/H3N2 and 5 were influenza B. **All circulating strains are included in this season's influenza vaccine.**

Figure 1. Courtesy of Influenza Surveillance Program BCCDC



Our low influenza activity is very different from that seen in Québec, Ontario, and Alberta where influenza activity is within expected range and is continuing to increase. The majority of typed specimens from these provinces have been influenza A/H3N2, which did not circulate in the 2009-2010 season. Although influenza activity in BC has been low so far, activity did increase in the past week, and we may well see a significant increase in illness due to influenza in the coming weeks. **Vaccinating your patients against influenza is still worthwhile and highly recommended.** If you need more vaccine, it can still be ordered from the health unit.

Antiviral Treatment Guidelines for the Current Season are Now Published

Treatment of influenza with oseltamivir or zanamivir is recommended for:

- those with risk factors for severe influenza illness, who present within 48 hours of onset of symptoms of influenza
- anyone with moderate, progressive, severe or complicated influenza even if presenting more than 48 hours after symptom onset

Risk groups at risk for severe influenza include pregnant women up to 2 weeks post-partum, children under 2 years of age, First Nations and Metis Canadians, people with a BMI > 40, people with asthma and other chronic lung diseases, cardiovascular disease, malignancy, chronic renal insufficiency, chronic liver disease, diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases, hemoglobinopathies such as sickle cell disease, immunosuppression, rheumatologic conditions, and neurologic conditions that compromise handling of respiratory secretions. Presumptive treatment (at the treatment dose) is also recommended for those with significant immunosuppression who are close contacts of a case of influenza.

If you require further information, please contact us at 604-983-6700.

Sincerely,

Brian A. O'Connor, MD, MHSc
Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore