

Influenza Surveillance Report 2017–2018

Week 44–46 (Oct. 29–Nov. 18, 2017)

Data extracted Nov. 24, 2017 at 11:00 am

Summary: Low activity

The seasonal influenza activity level in Manitoba overall is low. All syndromic indicators show a low respiratory activity level. However, there has been an increase in laboratory-confirmed influenza activity in Week 46. Influenza A(H3) has been the predominating strain. Two influenza outbreaks have occurred in facilities. Nine residents have been confirmed to have influenza from those two facilities and potentially more residents have been affected. Two institutional influenza outbreaks are considered quite early at this time of year. Overall, 77% of all influenza patients this season are older people over the age of 65 years. Rhinovirus is still the most commonly detected respiratory virus.

At the national level, Week 45 marked the official start of the influenza season and according to FluWatch, the activity level continues to increase. The number and percentage of laboratory tests positive for both influenza A and B is higher for this time of year compared to previous seasons. The majority of influenza detections continue to be A(H3N2) and an elevated number of influenza B detections have also been reported.

Laboratory

Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases:

In Week 46:

- Influenza A cases: **14**
- Influenza B cases: **0**

Since Sept. 1, 2017:

- Influenza A cases: **23**
- Influenza B cases: **0**

Severity

Severe outcomes associated with laboratory-confirmed diagnosis of influenza:

In Week 46:

- Hospitalizations: **6**
- ICU* admissions: **0**
- Deaths: **0**

Since Sept. 1, 2017:

- Hospitalizations: **12**
- ICU* admissions: **2**
- Deaths: **2**

Outbreak

Laboratory-confirmed Influenza outbreaks:

In Week 46:

- Influenza A outbreaks: **2**
- Influenza B outbreaks: **0**

Since Sept. 1, 2017:

- Influenza A outbreaks: **2**
- Influenza B outbreaks: **0**

Syndromic in Community

Calls to Influenza Service at Health Links–Info Santé this week: **15**

Syndromic in Care

Visits to sentinel physicians due to ILI this week: **0%**

Units of Antiviral dispensed from community retail pharmacies: **N/A**

Syndromic in ED

ILI patients in Emergency Department (ED) this week: **133/day**

Immunization

As of Nov. 18, 2017:

- Percent of total doses ordered by immunization service providers shipped from MHSAL across Manitoba: **95.9%**
- Percentage of Manitoban residents immunized with the seasonal influenza vaccine: **16.1%**

Antiviral Susceptibility

Isolates resistant to antiviral since Sept. 1, 2017 in Canada:

- Oseltamivir: **0** (out of 97 tests)
- Zanamivir: **0** (out of 97 tests)

Regional Health Authority

Influenza cases since Sept. 1, 2017:

- Winnipeg: **10**
- Southern: **0**
- Interlake-Eastern: **1**
- Prairie Mountain: **10**
- Northern: **2**

Note. * ICU admissions were also included in hospitalizations.

Time trends in this report were analyzed by [epidemiology week](#).

Numbers are subject to change. Missed events in the current report due to a delay of submission to MHSAL will be included in later reports when data become available.

Figure 1. Weekly Cases of Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza, Manitoba

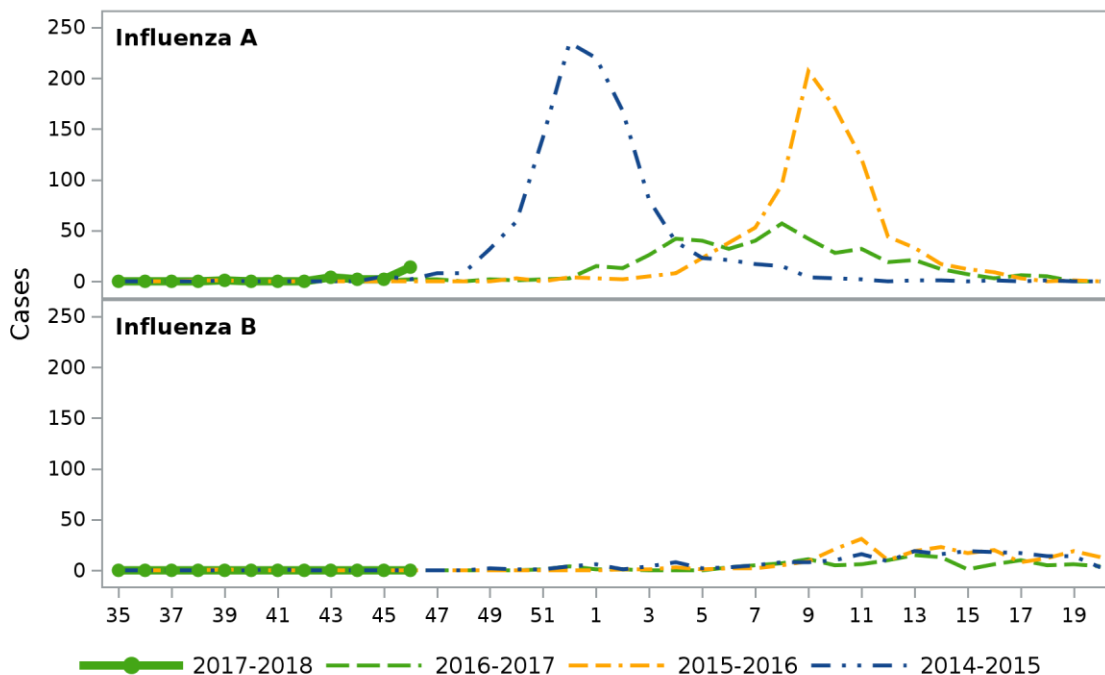


Figure 2. Weekly Influenza and ILI Outbreaks, Manitoba

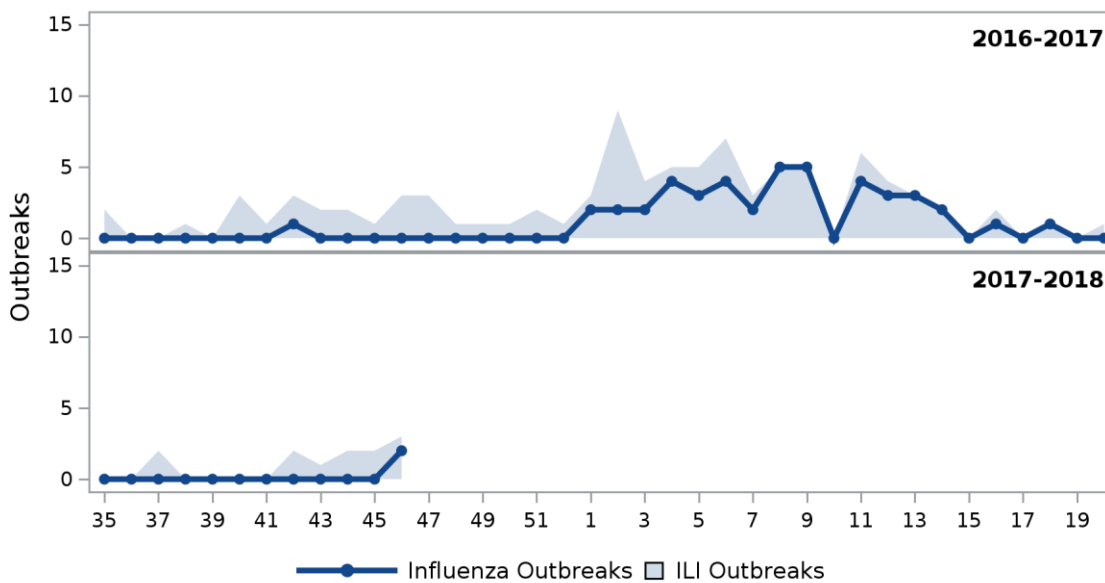


Figure 3. Weekly Influenza Related Calls to Health Link - Info Santé, Manitoba

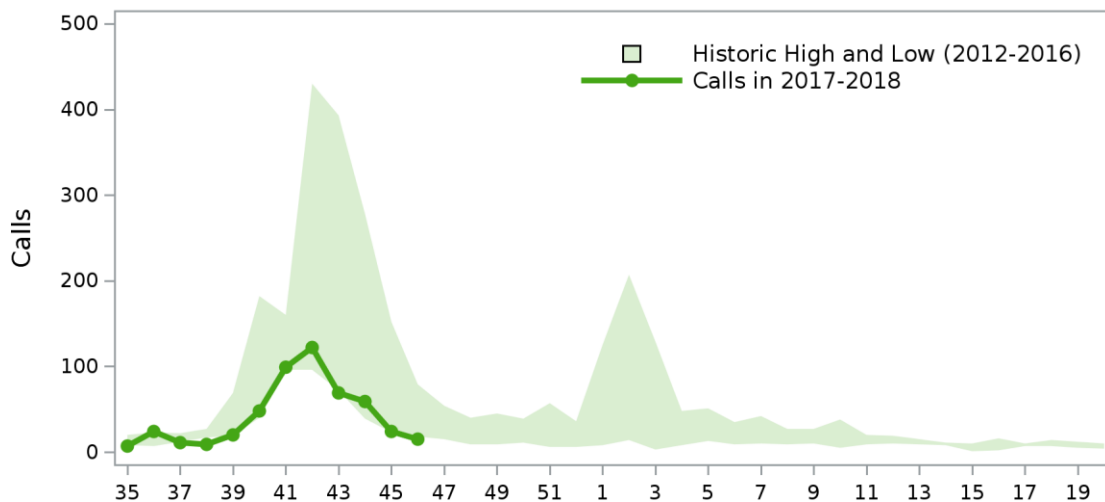


Figure 4. Weekly % of ILI Related Visits to Sentinel Physicians, Manitoba

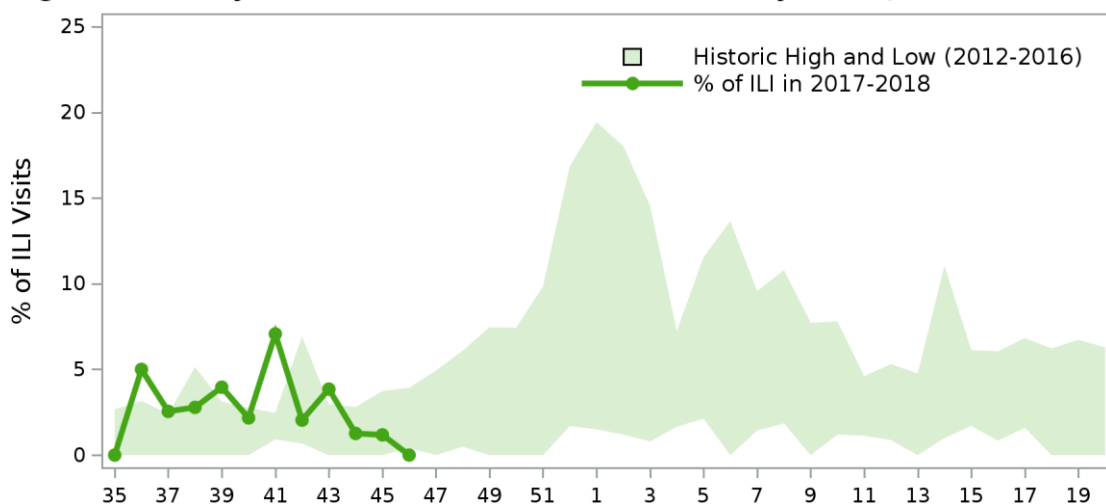


Figure 5. Weekly ILI Visits to Emergency Department and % of Total, Manitoba, 2017-2018

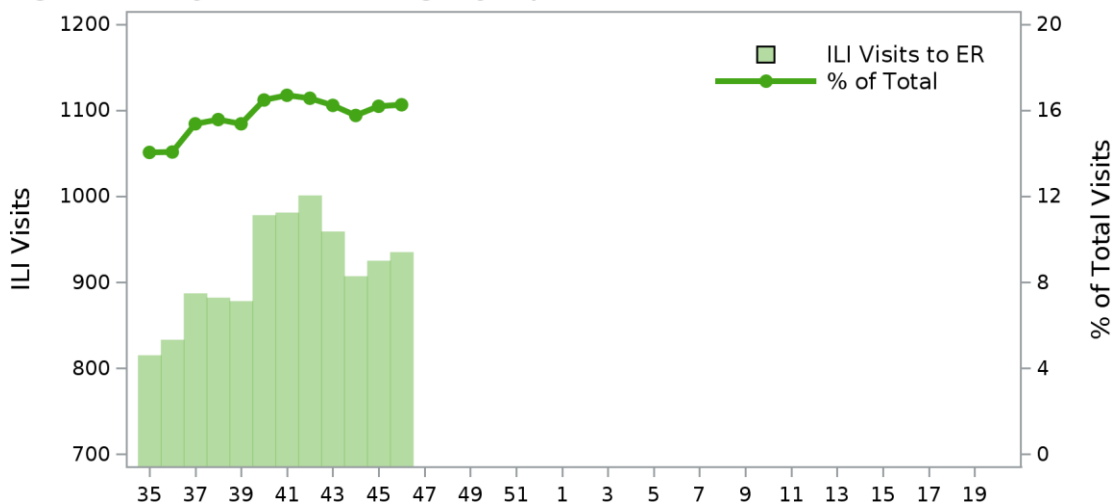


Figure 6. Weekly Total and ILI Visits to Emergency Department, Manitoba

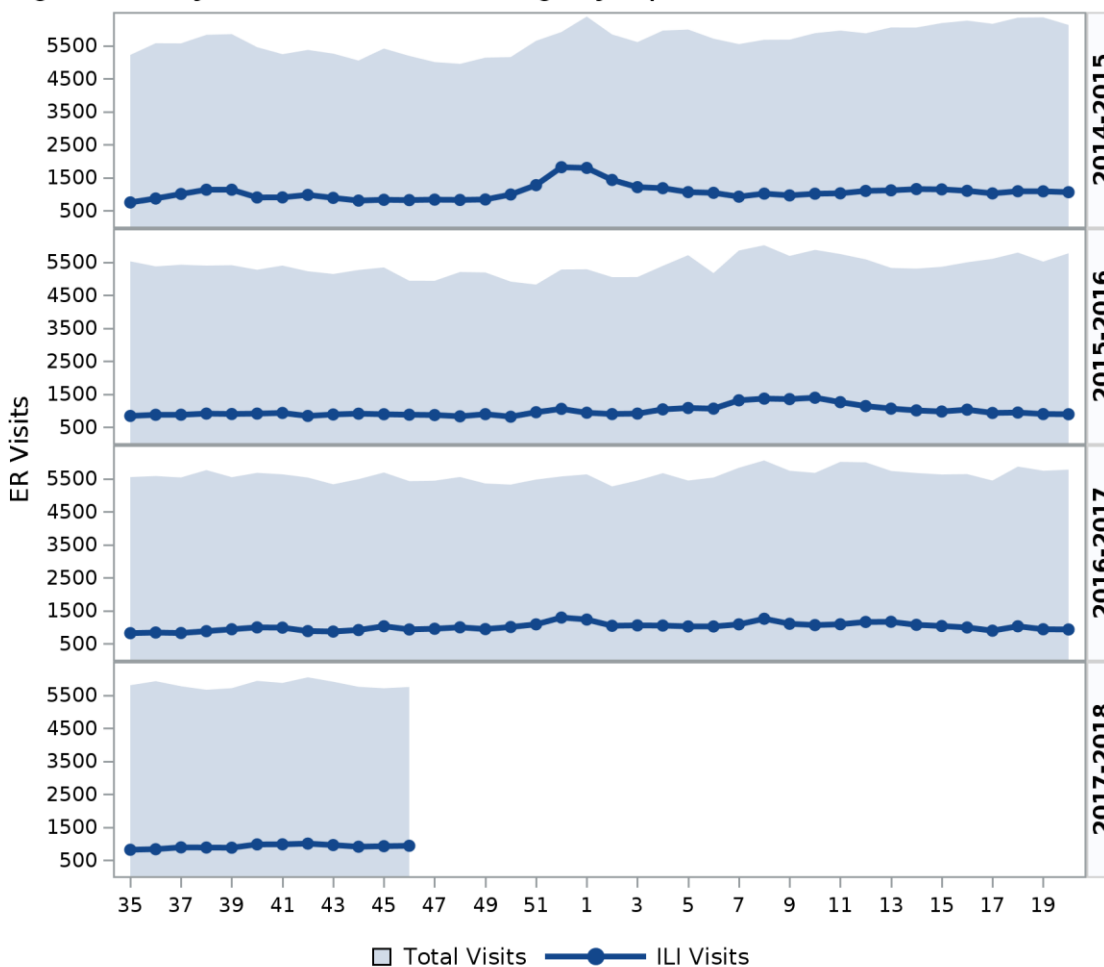


Table 1. Antiviral Resistance of Isolates by Influenza Type and Subtype since September 1, 2017, 2017–2018

		Oseltamivir		Zanamivir		Amantadine	
		Resistant	Sensitive	Resistant	Sensitive	Resistant	Sensitive
Canada	A(H3N2)	0	79	0	79	14	0
	A(H1N1)	0	6	0	6	6	0
	B	0	12	0	12	N/A	N/A
Manitoba	A(H3N2)	0	2	0	2	1	0
	A(H1N1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	B	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A

N/A = Not applicable

Table 2. Influenza Strain Characterization reported by NML since September 1, 2017, 2017–2018

Strain	Number of viruses	
	Canada	Manitoba
A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like	9	1
A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)-like	6	0
B/Brisbane/60/2008-like	2	0
B/Phuket/3073/2013-like	10	0

Since September 1, 2017, NML has characterized 88 influenza A and B viruses.

1. 70 influenza A (H3N2) viruses:

- 9 influenza A (H3N2) viruses were antigenically characterized as A/Hong Kong/4801/2014, the influenza A/H3N2 component of the 2017-2018 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine. In those 9 viruses, 7 belonged to genetic group 3C.2a and 2 belonged to subclade group 3C.2a1.
- 61 influenza A (H3N2) viruses did not grow to sufficient hemagglutination titers for antigenic characterization by hemagglutination inhibition assays. Therefore, genetic characterization was performed. Sequence analysis of the HA gene of these viruses showed that 46 H3N2 viruses belonged to genetic group 3C.2a and 15 belonged to subclade 3C.2a1. A/Hong Kong/4801/2014(H3N2)-like virus, the vaccine strain, belongs to genetic group 3C.2a.

2. 6 influenza A (H1N1) viruses:

- 6 influenza A (H1N1) viruses characterized were antigenically similar to A/Michigan/45/2015, the influenza A (H1N1) component in the vaccine.

3. 12 influenza B viruses:

- 2 influenza B viruses were characterized as B/Brisbane/60/2008-like (Victoria lineage), the influenza B component in the vaccine.
- 10 influenza B viruses characterized were antigenically similar to B/Phuket/3073/2013 (Yamagata lineage), the influenza B component only in the quadrivalent vaccine.

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Other Epidemiology and Surveillance reports
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/index.html>

National Influenza Surveillance
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php>

Appendix

Data Sources

Laboratory Surveillance

Reports of influenza nucleic acid detection, culture isolation, and enzyme immunoassay (EIA) detections are received from Cadham Provincial Laboratory (CPL) and occasionally other laboratories. These reports are forwarded to Epidemiology and Surveillance (E&S) within 24 hours of confirmation. CPL also performs testing for other respiratory viruses including parainfluenza, RSV, adenovirus, rhinovirus, coronavirus, enterovirus, and bocavirus, which are reported to E&S on a weekly basis.

Outbreak

Outbreaks are reported to E&S by a phone call or email from public health staff within Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) or from CPL advising the assignment of an outbreak code. CPL submits both positive and negative laboratory results related to outbreaks to E&S. Outbreak investigations are reported from RHAs to E&S by completing an outbreak summary report form on paper or electronically through the Canadian Network for Public Health Intelligence (CNPHI).

Health Links – Info Santé

Health Links–Info Santé is a 24-hour, 7-days a week telephone information service. It is staffed by registered nurses with the knowledge to provide answers to health care questions and guidance to appropriate care over the phone. When a caller phones Health Links–Info Santé and selects Influenza Service, they are given an option to select information on (1) the groups of individuals who are at an increased risk of serious illness, (2) how to arrange an influenza vaccine, (3) the annual influenza immunization campaign, or (4) the management of influenza and its potential complications.

ILI visits to sentinel physicians

Manitoba participates in *FluWatch*, the Canada's national surveillance system co-ordinated by Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), which monitors the spread of influenza and ILI on a year-round basis. *FluWatch* consists of a network of laboratories, hospitals, doctor's offices and provincial and territorial ministries of health. In 2017–2018, there are 19 sentinel physicians recruited throughout Manitoba reporting to *FluWatch* weekly. E&S receives weekly reports from *FluWatch* which present the ILI rate for Manitoba and for each of the participating sentinel physicians. Note that the reporting sentinel physicians are different by week and their reports may not be representative of ILI activity across the province.

Antiviral dispensing

The units of antiviral drug, Oseltamivir and Zanamivir, dispensed from community retail pharmacies since beginning of October to Manitoba residents during the influenza season are reported to E&S from Drug Programs Information Network (DPIN) on a weekly basis. Antiviral drugs dispensed to in-patients or through nursing stations could not be included in this report due to lack of data.

ILI visits to Emergency Rooms

Daily statistics of ILI related visits to Emergency Department (ED) at Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) are submitted to E&S weekly. ILI cases are defined as patients whose triage chief complaints contain either of these symptoms: weakness, shortness of breath, cough, headache, fever, cardiac/respiratory arrest, sore throat, and upper respiratory tract infection complaints.

Antiviral Resistance

Influenza and Respiratory Viruses Section of National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) undertakes enhanced surveillance, investigations, and research on influenza and other respiratory pathogens. A random sample of positive influenza specimens isolated by culture is referred from each provincial laboratory to NML for strain characterization and antiviral resistance testing. The aggregate level information is then shared with provinces and territories on a weekly basis.

Circulating Strain

NML antigenically characterizes influenza viruses received from Canadian laboratories year-round. In Manitoba, a random sample of positive influenza specimens isolated by culture is referred from CPL to NML for strain characterization.

Immunization Program

As per World Health Organization (WHO), all seasonal quadrivalent influenza vaccines for 2017–2018 in the northern hemisphere contain:

- A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus (in trivalent vaccine)
- A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (in trivalent vaccine)
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (in trivalent vaccine)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus

For the 2017–2018 influenza season, MHSAL has been allotted the quadrivalent inactivated vaccines (QIV), Fluzone® Quadrivalent (Sanofi Pasteur) and FluLaval Tetra® (GlaxoSmithKline), and the quadrivalent live attenuated influenza vaccine (QLAIV) FluMist® Quadrivalent (AstraZeneca), as part of the province's Publicly-Funded Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program.

This year, a new seasonal influenza vaccine, Fluzone® High-Dose, is offered to people 65 years of age or older that are living in long-term care facilities (LTCF) in Manitoba. This vaccine is a trivalent inactivated vaccine (TIV) and contains four times the amount of influenza virus antigen per strain compared to the standard-dose influenza vaccine. Therefore, this vaccine is expected to provide better protection against seasonal influenza compared to the standard-dose vaccine.

Abbreviations

CPL	Cadham Provincial Laboratory
CNPHI	Canadian Network for Public Health Intelligence
E&S	Epidemiology and Surveillance
ED	Emergency Department
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
ILI	Influenza-Like-Illness
LTCF	Long Term Care Facility
MHSAL	Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living
NML	National Microbiology Laboratory
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
RHA	Regional Health Authority
RSV	Respiratory Syncytial Virus
WRHA	Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Explanatory Notes and Definitions

Cumulative data

Cumulative data include updates to previous weeks; due to reporting delays or amendments, the sum of weekly report totals may not add up to cumulative totals.

Data extraction date

Manitoba-specific information contained within this report is based on data confirmed at 11:00 am on the date of data extraction.

Epidemiology week

Time trends in this report were analyzed by [epidemiology week](#), a schedule used by the national FluWatch program coordinated by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Incidence rate

Incidence rate measures the frequency with which influenza occurs in a region. It is calculated as the total number of new cases this influenza season multiplied by 100,000 and divided by the total population in each region. Regional populations are based on the Manitoba Health Population Report 2015.

ILI in the general population

Acute onset of respiratory illness with fever and cough and with one or more of the following – sore throat, arthralgia, myalgia, or prostration, which is likely due to influenza. In children under 5, gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present. In patients under 5 or 65 and older, fever may not be prominent.

ILI outbreaks

Schools: Greater than 10% absenteeism (or absenteeism that is higher (e.g. >5-10%) than expected level as determined by school or public health authority) which is likely due to ILI.

Hospitals and residential institutions: Two or more cases of ILI within a seven-day period.

Other settings: Two or more cases of ILI within a seven-day period, including at least one laboratory confirmed case; i.e. workplace, closed communities.

Specimen collection date

The date the laboratory specimen was taken is used to assign cases to the epidemiology week in this report. Occasionally, if the specimen collection date is not available, the laboratory report date will be used.

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