



ID Consult: Antibiotic choice for acute otitis media for 2018

NEWS FROM THE FDA/CDC

This is what a flu pandemic looks like

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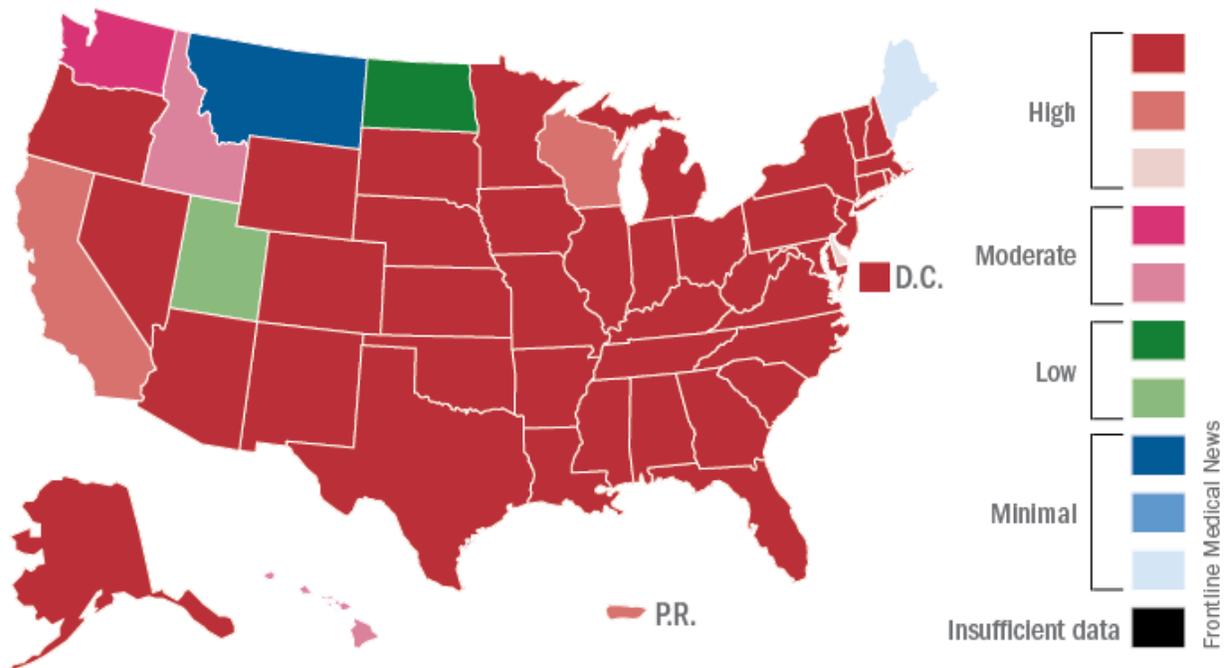


FROM A CDC TELECONFERENCE

The 2017-2018 flu season shows no signs of letting up and is now within a rounding error of equaling the all-time high activity level recorded in the pandemic of 2009-2010, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For the week ending Feb. 3, 2018, the proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 7.7%, which would appear to equal the mark of 7.7% set in October of 2009. The earlier 7.7%, however, is rounded down from 7.715%, while the current mark is rounded up from 7.653%, data from the CDC's [Fluview website](#) show.

Influenza-like illness activity level, week ending Feb. 3, 2018



Note: Based on data from the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza were above the epidemic threshold set by the National Center for Health Statistics Mortality Surveillance system, acting CDC director Anne Schuchat, MD, said in a teleconference sponsored by the agency.

ILI activity was at level 10 on the CDC's 1-10 scale in 41 states, compared with 34 the week before, and was categorized in the "high" range (levels 8-10) in another 3 states and Puerto Rico, according to data from the CDC's Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network. In California, which was noted as a possible bright spot last week by Dr. Schuchat because activity there had been decreasing, the ILI level went back up to level 9 after being at 7 the week before.

Flu-related hospitalizations are continuing to rise at a record clip, with the cumulative rate for the week of Feb. 3 at 59.9 per 100,000 population, the [CDC reported](#). A total of 1 in 10 hospital-based deaths last week were related to influenza. At this point in the 2014-2015 flu season – which has the highest number of hospitalizations at 710,000 – the hospitalization rate was only 50.9 per 100,000 population.

There were 10 pediatric deaths reported for the week ending Feb. 3, although 9 occurred in previous weeks. There have been 63 flu-related deaths among children so far during the 2017-2018 season.

Dr. Schuchat continued to recommend members of the public to get a flu shot and to stay home if they are feeling sick.

“What could be mild symptoms for you could be deadly for someone else,” Dr. Schuchat said, adding that antiviral medications remain important. “Physicians do not have to wait for confirmatory flu testing. They should begin treatment with antiviral drugs immediately in they suspect they have a severely ill or a high risk patient.”

“Flu vaccines often have lower effectiveness against H3N1 viruses. However, some protection is better than none. The vaccine’s effectiveness against other flu viruses, like B and H1N1, is better. Because of the ongoing intensity of the flu season and the increasing circulation of influenza B and h1n1, we do continue to recommend vaccination even this late in the season.”

Dr. Schuchat stressed the importance of the pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine. “Flu can make people more vulnerable to secondary infections like bacterial pneumonia. We recommend people aged 65 and over get a pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine,” she said.

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