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It's not too late to be vaccinated.... Physicians are encouraged to continue to offer influenza vaccine in December, January and beyond.

- **Free flu shots** are available. Restrictions on the use of Orange County publicly funded influenza vaccine have been lifted. Free flu shots are now available to adults of all ages and children 6 months of age and older through programs sponsored by the Orange County Health Care Agency. For more information on influenza vaccination locations and schedules, please call the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or visit www.ochealthinfo.com.
- **The use of rapid viral testing for influenza to evaluate febrile infants may lead to enhanced management.** Results of the study, presented in the December issue of *The Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal* (Vol 25, Issue 12), found that the inclusion of rapid influenza testing for the evaluation of febrile young infants without signs of focal infection during the influenza season reduces the length of stay in the emergency department, the use of antibiotic treatment and unnecessary hospitalizations. To access the article, visit <http://www.pidj.com> (subscription required).
- **Effectiveness of School-Based Influenza Vaccination.** The study suggests that the vaccination of school-aged children may reduce the spread of influenza to their households and to other students. The result are published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Vol 355, No 24). For free access: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/355/24/2523?query=TOC>.
- **Efficacy of live attenuated influenza vaccine compared to inactivated vaccine during the 2004-2005 season, when most of the circulating viruses were dissimilar to those in the vaccine.** Results of a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Vol 355, No 24) found a higher absolute efficacy of inactivated vaccine as compared to live attenuated vaccine in preventing laboratory-confirmed symptomatic illnesses from influenza in healthy adults. The difference in efficacy was attributed to the reduced protection of the live attenuated vaccine against type B virus. For free access: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/355/24/2513.pdf>.
 - **Please note:** The above NEJM study results contrast with previous reports that the live attenuated vaccine may have superior relative efficacy as compared with inactivated vaccine in preventing influenza illness in children. Two recent articles can be found in the October issue of *The Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal* at www.pidj.com. More information is needed on the efficacy of the live attenuated vaccine in different populations and different influenza seasons.



Avian Influenza Update

- 258 human H5N1 cases have been confirmed in Azerbaijan (8), Cambodia (6), China (21), Djibouti (1), Egypt (15), Indonesia (74), Iraq (3), Thailand (25), Turkey (12), and Vietnam (93), and have resulted in 154 deaths. H5N1-infected birds have been reported in multiple areas in Asia, Africa and Europe. For a list of H5N1-affected countries, see <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/af/index.htm>.
- Patients with fever and respiratory symptoms and a recent history of travel from H5N1-affected areas should be reported immediately to OC Epidemiology at 714-834-8180.

Influenza Update

- OC reported 1 new flu cases this week. A total of 4 cases have been reported this season (1 flu B/3 flu A). During week 49, flu activity remained low overall in the US, but increased in the Southeast. One state reported widespread flu activity; three states reported regional flu activity; seven states reported local flu activity; 30 states, including **California**, and NYC reported sporadic flu activity.



Recommended Resources

General: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

OC: <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/flu/surveillance.htm>

CA: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dc/dc/VRDL/html/FLU/Fluintro.htm>

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; HHS: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

If you have any comments about the flyer, contact Pamela Roa Hipp or Sandra Nutter at (714) 834-8180. To receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at epi@ochca.com.