



Orange County Health Care Agency, Epidemiology & Assessment, 1719 W. 17th St. Santa Ana, CA 92706, (714) 834-8180

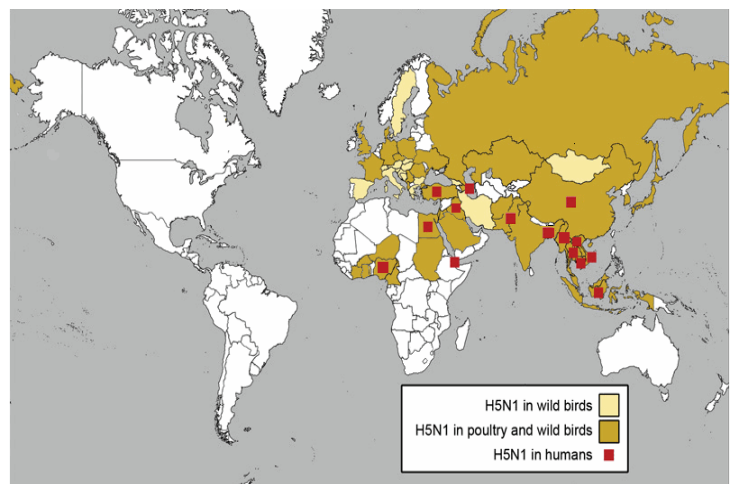
Official influenza surveillance season in the U.S. begins September 28th. Influenza vaccine distribution has started already. For persons who are unable to get vaccinated through their own physician, available retail flu vaccine clinics can be found at www.flucliniclocator.org or www.findaflushot.com.

- **CDC updates on-line seasonal influenza resources for 2008-2009.** For the 2008-2009 influenza prevention and control recommendations, updates on antiviral agents, and free flu materials for download, see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals>.
- **Study reveals that maternal influenza immunization reduces influenza illness in infants.** Influenza infection can lead to serious illness and hospitalization in infants and pregnant women. Because influenza vaccination is not licensed for infants younger than six months of age, researchers assessed the effectiveness of maternal vaccination during pregnancy on influenza illness in infants and mothers. The randomized, blinded study assigned 340 healthy unvaccinated mothers in Bangladesh to receive either inactivated influenza vaccine (influenza-vaccine group) or the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (control group) between August 2004 through May 2005; mothers and infants were observed until the infants were 24 weeks of age. Maternal influenza immunization resulted in a 63% reduction in laboratory-confirmed influenza illness in infants up to 24 weeks of age and reductions of 29% and 36% in rates of respiratory illness with fever in infants and mothers, respectively. Although this study was done in a country with influenza circulating year-round, these results support the strategy of maternal immunization to prevent influenza infection in young infants and their mothers. See *N Engl J Med*, published online 9/17/08; free access to this article available at <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/NEJMoa0708630>. Recommendations for vaccination of women pregnant during influenza season have been in place in the U.S. since 1997, but only 13% of pregnant women were vaccinated in 2007.
- **Hong Kong school closures in winter of 2008 had little effect on community transmission of influenza.** Public health officials in Hong Kong had ordered schools closed for two weeks in March 2008 after the death of three children, apparently from seasonal influenza. However, retrospective review of surveillance data before, during and after the school closures suggest that influenza activity had already peaked and was on the decline before the closures, and thus the closures may have come too late in the season to have much effect on community transmission. In addition, the indirect effects of school closure may not be as evident in mild to moderate influenza seasons such as this one. Surveillance system improvements, particularly real-time or near real-time reporting, could help officials make more informed decisions during an epidemic. See *Emerging Infectious Diseases* Oct 2008, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/10/pdfs/08-0646.pdf>.

Avian Influenza Update

- As of September 10, 2008, two new cases of human H5N1 in Indonesia have been confirmed by the WHO for a total of 387 cases and 245 deaths (63%) in 15 countries. For the latest WHO H5N1 updates, see www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/.
- Report any suspect avian influenza cases to OC Epidemiology at 714-834-8180.

Nations with Confirmed H5N1 Avian Influenza Cases (as of September, 2008)



Recommended Resources

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>;
 OC: <http://www.ochcahealthinfo.com/epi/flu/surveillance.htm>;
 CA: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/VRDL/html/FLU/Fluintro.htm>;
 HHS: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>; General: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

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

