



COUNTY OF IMPERIAL
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

February 26, 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Seven Influenza-Associated Deaths in Imperial County

Another influenza-associated death was reported this week. This most recent case was 54 years old and had a chronic underlying condition. Since the beginning of the flu season on September 29, 2019, there are a total of seven influenza-associated deaths reported in Imperial County. As with previous cases, it is unknown whether this individual had been vaccinated against influenza this season.

Statewide there have been 381 influenza-associated deaths reported, including twelve pediatric deaths since the start of the 2019-2020 influenza season.

Influenza activity remains high in Imperial County, with influenza A (H1N1) predominantly circulating within the community. As flu activity continues to be widespread in California, visits to outpatient clinics and hospitalizations due to respiratory illness continue to be higher than expected for this time of the year.

Influenza (flu) is a contagious viral respiratory illness. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as those 65 years of age and older, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk of serious flu complications. The best way to prevent the flu is to be vaccinated every year.

When indicated, antiviral treatment should be started as soon as possible after illness onset, ideally within 48 hours of symptom onset. However, antiviral treatment might have some benefits in patients with severe, complicated or progressive illness and in hospitalized patients when started after 48 hours of illness onset.

Vaccination against influenza is recommended for all persons six months of age and older, including health-care personnel. Children 6 months - 8 years of age getting vaccinated for the first time, and those who have only gotten one dose of flu vaccine previously, should get two doses of flu vaccine this season – spaced at least 4 weeks apart. It can take about two weeks after the second dose for protection against flu to begin.

Vaccine is available throughout the community including doctor's offices, the Public Health Department, and local pharmacies. The cost for the flu vaccine is \$5 at the health department.

For more information about the flu vaccine, contact the Public Health Department's Immunization Program at (442) 265-1394 or email jovanaaraujo@co.imperial.ca.us

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