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Influenza Report Seasonal Summary for 2017-2018*

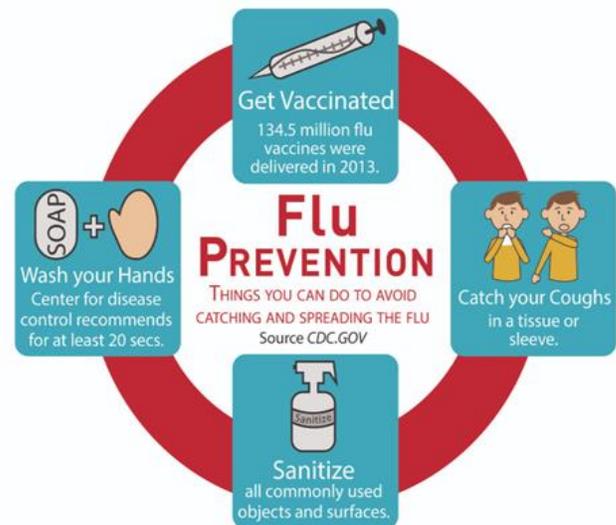
Influenza, commonly known as flu, is an infectious disease of birds and mammals caused by RNA viruses of the family orthomyxoviridae (the influenza viruses). In humans, common symptoms of disease are chills, then fever, sore throat, muscle pains, severe headache, coughing, weakness and general discomfort. In more severe cases, influenza causes pneumonia, which can be fatal, particularly in young children and the elderly. Although it is sometimes confused with the common cold, influenza is a much more severe disease and is caused by different types of viruses.

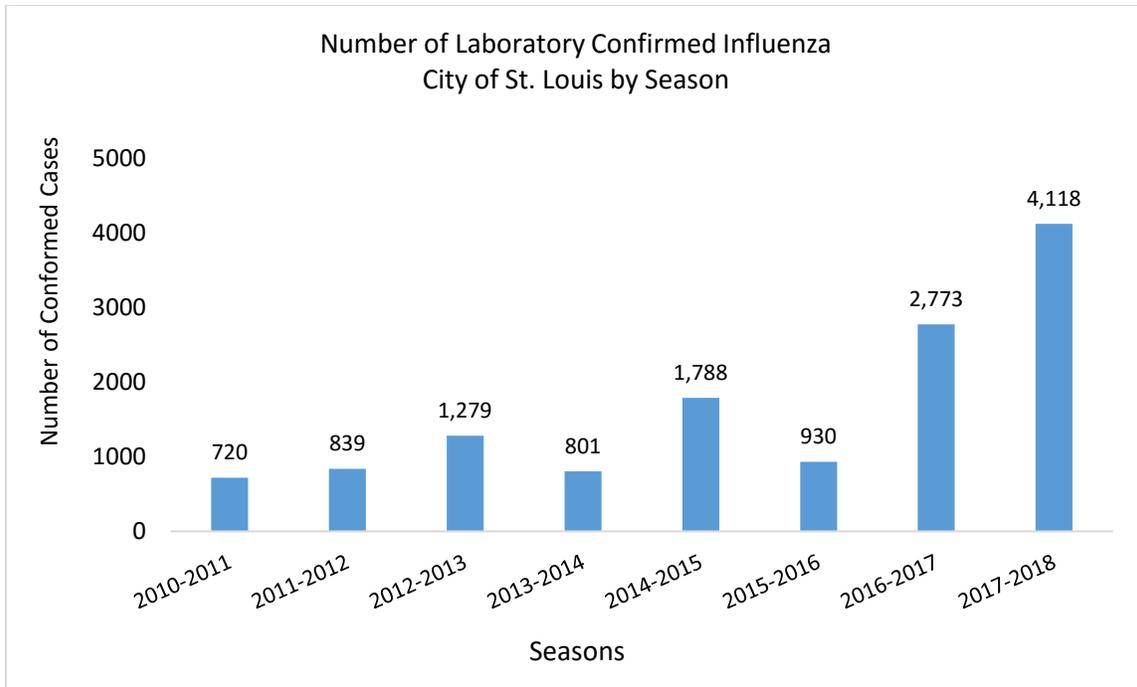
Typical influenza is transmitted from infected mammals through the air by coughs or sneezes, creating aerosols containing the virus, or from infected birds through their droppings. Influenza can also be transmitted through contact of body fluids such as saliva, nasal secretion, feces and blood or contaminated surfaces.

In Missouri, influenza is a reportable disease. The circulating influenza A (H3N2) viruses were antigenically different than the influenza A (H3N2) component of the 2017-18 seasonal vaccine. This resulted in reduced effectiveness of the vaccine. As with prior seasons where H3N2 was predominant, the CDC categorized the 2017-18 season as moderately severe with overall high levels of outpatient illness.

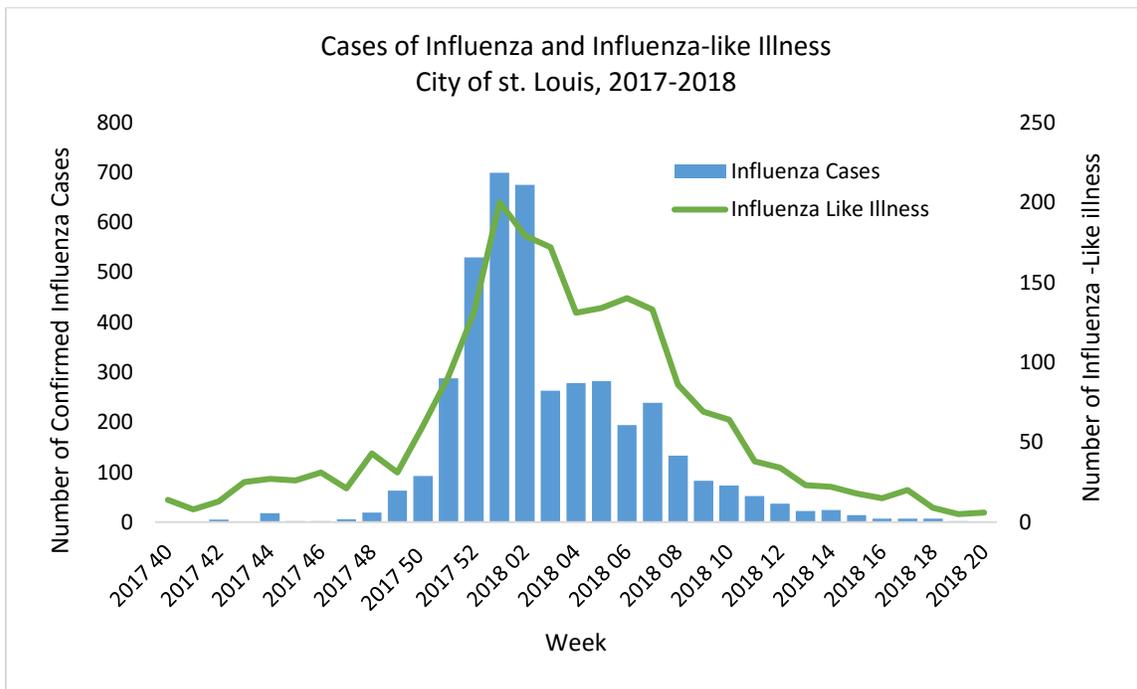
This report summarizes the 2017-18 influenza season (October 01, 2017-May 19, 2018) in the City of St. Louis. The number of laboratory confirmed Influenza cases reported for the City in the 2017-2018 influenza season was the highest compared to the previous seven seasons and two times higher than the 2016-2017 season.

A total of 4,118 cases of influenza were reported October 1, 2017 through May 19, 2018. Of the 4,118 reported cases, 2,849 were influenza A, 1,267 were influenza B, and 2 were not typed. There were five deaths associated with influenza this flu season.

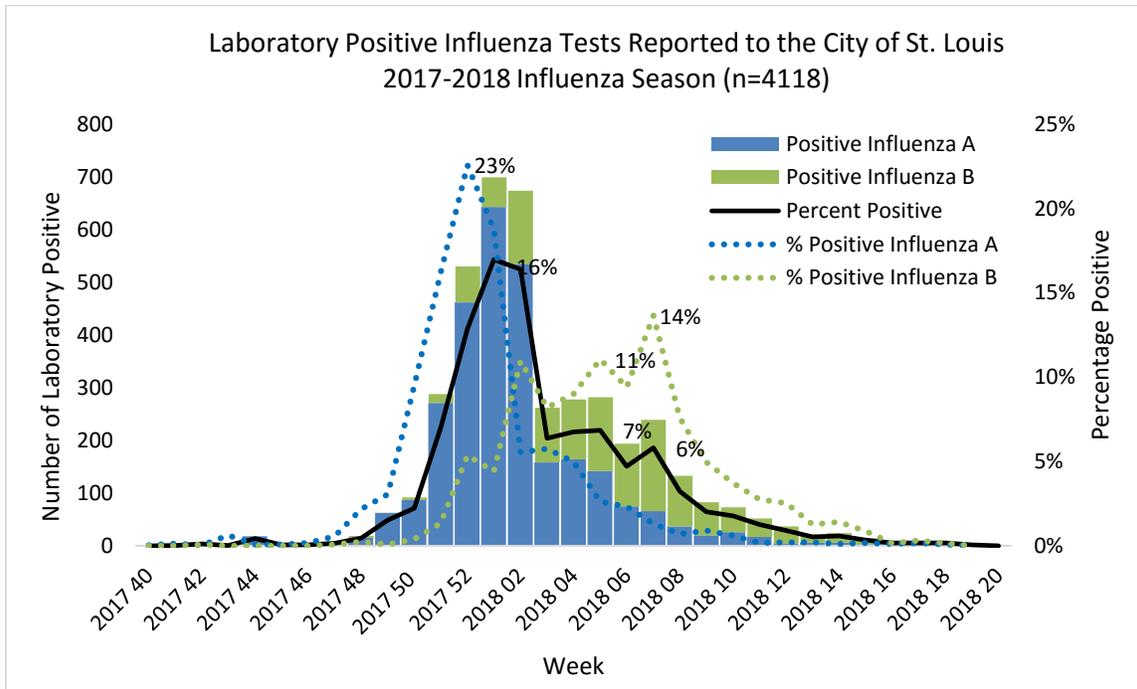




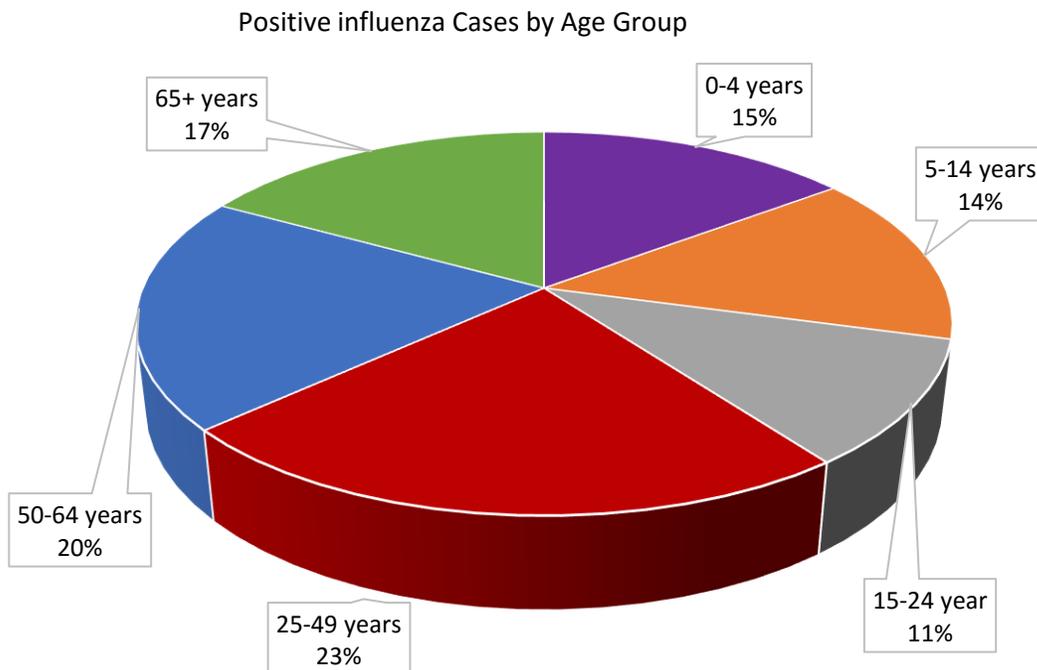
As part of routine surveillance, the City of St. Louis Department of Health utilizes a regional syndromic surveillance system to track visits for influenza-like illness for City residents and hospitals in the City. Influenza-like illness is defined as a visit with the following symptoms: fever or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, muscle or body aches, headaches, runny or stuffed nose, fatigue or tiredness. The graph below displays laboratory confirmed cases of influenza and influenza-like illness by week.



In the City of St. Louis, influenza A (H3N2) viruses were the predominant strain at the beginning of the 2017-2018 season. Influenza B viruses became predominant in the later part of the season beginning with week 6 which followed the national trend.



During the 2017-18 season, St. Louis City reported the highest percentage (23%) of influenza cases in the 25-49 year age group category. The next highest percentage (20%) was in the 50-64 year age group.



Summary

The City of St. Louis Department of Health conducted surveillance for influenza-like illness for the 2017-2018 season beginning in October 2017 through the end of May 2018. Influenza activity in City of St. Louis during the 2017-2018 season peaked in the first week of 2018 (December 31-January 6, 2018).

*Numbers in this report are preliminary.

Source:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>

MMWR December 8, 2017 / 66(48); 1318-1326

MMWR February 16, 2018 / 67(6); 180-185