

HEALTH ADVISORY: Oregon Influenza Activity Increasing: OHA Clinician & Laboratory Recommendations

December 23, 2024

Dear Colleagues, we hope this message finds you well.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reported influenza activity is increasing rapidly in Oregon and will likely remain elevated over the next several months. **The best protection against severe influenza is the seasonal influenza vaccine.** The CDC universally recommends influenza vaccination for all people 6 months of age and older every year. OHA's recommendations for clinicians and laboratories include:

Recommendations for Clinicians

- All providers should familiarize themselves with [CDC's Clinical Guidance for Hospitalized and Non-Hospitalized Patients When SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating](#), including broad indications for influenza antiviral medications such as oseltamivir, which reduce the risk of hospitalization.
- Outpatient providers, including urgent care clinics, should maximize vaccine and antiviral medicine availability and consider expanding hours of operation to prevent emergency department and hospital overload.
- Pharmacies should increase influenza antiviral therapy (e.g., oseltamivir) stock.
- Health care systems and providers should provide information to families about the signs and symptoms of severe disease that require urgent evaluation.
- Inpatient providers should consider retesting severely ill influenza-positive patients with a molecular assay to allow for subtyping if their initial specimen (e.g., a rapid influenza test) was not available for subtyping.
- All people who are known to have been exposed to animals infected with avian influenza are actively monitored by public health through 10 days following their last exposure. If a person exposed to avian influenza develops symptoms of influenza-like illness, they are promptly tested and treated with oseltamivir by public health. [The risk of avian influenza to the general public remains low.](#)

Recommendations for Laboratories

- Oregon Health Authority asks all Oregon hospital laboratories to submit all influenza-positive specimens from all hospitalized patients for subtyping and species typing to the Oregon State

Public Health Laboratory to bolster surveillance for seasonal and novel influenza, including highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) or 'bird flu'.

- Guidance for Submitting Specimens for 2024-25 Influenza Surveillance is available [here](#).

For questions regarding influenza, please contact Dr. Melissa Sutton at Melissa.Sutton@oha.oregon.gov.

We appreciate your support of our shared goal of improved community health.

Respectfully,



Carolina Amador, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer



April Holland
Public Health Administrator



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