

**Town of Fairfield  
Influenza Surveillance Data and Information**

**Fall 09 Update #4 - 10/27/09**

**Updates will be will be posted as new and/or significant information is received**  
The information below is current as of the date and time of posting, usually about 4pm.

**Today' Updates**

- The CT Department of Public Health indicated that CT's second wave of the H1N1 pandemic started last week.
- A Guilford high school was closed yesterday and today and a Middletown middle school has closed for the rest of the week both due to absenteeism above 40%. Region 10 School District (Harwinton/Burlington) closes for three days (this W-F) due to district wide absenteeism of 27%
- Currently in Fairfield we are starting to see increases in all of our current indicators (absenteeism, flu-like illness seen by the school RN and lab reports of flu)
- Flu-like illness is being seen in public and private schools, the universities, and preschools in Fairfield.
- Dwight Elementary School had a 10.4 absenteeism rate yesterday. This is the first school to rise above 10% absenteeism this year. All other schools remain below 10% absenteeism (range of 3.3% - 8.6%)
- Based upon the current information we should expect to start seeing a steady and perhaps rapid rise in absenteeism at schools as well as in increase in flu-like illness in all schools and community-wide over the next few weeks. (See the Centers for Disease Control recommendations below).
- Sporadic reports of influenza in the community continue to be received (from physician in-office rapid tests or other laboratory reports). See Table 2 below for updated details.
- Seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 vaccine have been received by the Health Department and private practices. See the Seasonal and H1N1 Vaccination updates on the Town of Fairfield website at [www.fairfieldct.org](http://www.fairfieldct.org) for more information.
- Significant change from last spring's recommendations: **Anyone who is ill with flu-like symptoms is advised to stay home and away from others for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). There is no longer the minimum 7-day exclusion period recommendation.**
- Fairfield has had a total of 40 confirmed H1N1 case to date, with 38 occurring prior to 8/29/09 and 2 being reported since 8/30/09

**Important Information**

The 2009 H1N1 flu is continuing to circulate and as we approach the seasonal flu period, it is possible that both will be co-circulating over the next several months.

Currently the 2009 H1N1 flu remains similar, in severity of illness, as in the spring of 2009. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations provided below are based upon conditions currently being seen which are similar to what was experienced in the spring of 2009.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends 4 main ways you and your family may keep from getting sick with the flu at school and at home:**

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.

- **Anyone who is ill with flu-like symptoms is advised to stay home and away from others** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping sick students at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available. Both private medical practices and the Health Department will be offering seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations this fall. Seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 vaccine have been received by the Health Department and private practices. See the Seasonal and H1N1 Vaccination updates on the Town of Fairfield website at [www.fairfieldct.org](http://www.fairfieldct.org) for more information.

If a more severe illness begins to be seen (than was experienced in the spring of 2009), the CDC has developed additional recommendations that can be considered; these can be reviewed at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/schoolguidance.htm>

### Background Information to Consider

- According to the CT Department of Public Health (DPH), the typical school absenteeism experienced during the peak of seasonal flu activity in CT ranges from 10-20%.
- During the peak of the last spring's flu activity, 5 Fairfield schools saw absenteeism rise above 10%, none went above 20%. In the communities of Greenwich and Ridgefield, the DPH reports that individual schools did briefly experience 40-50% absenteeism rates with schools remaining open.
- Factors to consider related to the absenteeism seen last spring are 1) most parents were complying with previous recommendation for those who are ill (staying home for 7 days or 24 hours after symptoms subside, whichever is longer; these have now changed see above), and 2) due to heightened concern, since less was known about the H1N1 flu, many parents were choosing to keep their healthy children out of school.
- A joint letter to all school parents began being distributed on 8/28/09 updating them on the current influenza situation and making them aware of these updates. The letter can be found on the Town website.

### Other Data

We are providing the data in Tables 1 and 2 for comparison of 2008-2009 seasonal influenza experience and the 2009 H1N1 experience to date. Most influenza being experienced now is the 2009 H1N1 strain and while the state lab is no longer conducting routine confirmatory testing; private labs (Quest and Yale) are conducting confirmatory testing when requested by a physician. We will most likely continue to receive some reports of confirmed 2009 H1N1 cases but this number will be very small since most physicians are not requesting confirmatory testing.

**Table 1**

<b>Number of 2008-2009 Seasonal Influenza Reports in Fairfield*</b>	
<b>Week:</b>	<b>Number of Influenza Cases:</b>
<b>Dec. 7-Dec. 13</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Dec. 14-Dec. 20</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dec. 21-Dec.27</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Dec. 28-Jan. 3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Jan. 4-Jan. 10</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Jan. 11-Jan. 17</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Jan. 18-Jan. 24</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Jan. 25-Jan. 31</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>Feb. 1-Feb. 7</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Feb. 8-Feb. 14</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Feb. 15-Feb. 21</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Feb. 22-Feb. 28</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Mar. 1-Mar. 7</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Mar. 8-Mar. 14</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Mar. 15-Mar.21</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Mar. 22-Mar. 28</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mar. 29-Apr. 1</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Spring 2009 to Current Number of All Influenza Reports in Fairfield* (includes confirmed H1N1 cases)</b>	
<b>Week:</b>	<b>No. of Influenza Cases:</b>
May 3 <sup>rd</sup> -May 9 <sup>th</sup>	4
May 10 <sup>th</sup> -May 16 <sup>th</sup>	1
May 17 <sup>th</sup> -May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	4
May 24 <sup>th</sup> -May 30 <sup>th</sup>	8
May 31 <sup>st</sup> -June 6 <sup>th</sup>	22
June 7 <sup>th</sup> -June 13 <sup>th</sup>	52
June 14 <sup>th</sup> -June 20 <sup>th</sup>	58
June 21 <sup>st</sup> -June 27 <sup>th</sup>	28
June 28 <sup>th</sup> -July 4 <sup>th</sup>	8
July 5 <sup>th</sup> -July 11 <sup>th</sup>	1
July 12 <sup>th</sup> -July 18 <sup>th</sup>	0
July 19 <sup>th</sup> -July 25 <sup>th</sup>	0
July 26 <sup>th</sup> -August 1 <sup>st</sup>	1
August 2 <sup>nd</sup> -August 8 <sup>th</sup>	0
August 9 <sup>th</sup> -August 15 <sup>th</sup>	0
August 16 <sup>th</sup> -August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	0
August 23 <sup>rd</sup> -August 29 <sup>th</sup>	1
August 30 <sup>th</sup> -September 5 <sup>th</sup>	1
September 6 <sup>th</sup> -September 12 <sup>th</sup>	2
September 13 <sup>th</sup> -September 19 <sup>th</sup>	2
September 20 <sup>th</sup> -September 26 <sup>th</sup>	1
September 27 <sup>th</sup> -October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	0
October 4 <sup>th</sup> -October 10 <sup>th</sup>	3
October 11 <sup>th</sup> -October 16 <sup>th</sup>	1
October 17 <sup>th</sup> -October 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1

\*These are reports from physicians of in-office rapid tests or other laboratory reports based on the date testing was conducted. Many more cases of influenza are typically experienced in the community than are reported, many individuals do not seek medical care or do not have tests conducted. These numbers, especially the most recent weeks, are subject to change each day as new lab reports are received with test dates occurring during the date ranges.

**Table 3 – Percent Absent Comparison by School Year**

Year	Week of	School Level	Percent Absent
09-10	10/19/2009 to 10/23/2009	Elementary and Pre-K	3.2
09-10	10/19/2009 to 10/23/2009	Middle	3
09-10	10/19/2009 to 10/23/2009	High	3.7
08-09	10/20/2008 to 10/24/2008	Elementary and Pre-K	2
08-09	10/20/2008 to 10/24/2008	Middle	2.8
08-09	10/20/2008 to 10/24/2008	High	4.1

Update compiled by Sands Cleary, Director of Health with assistance from Nancy Fray and Joanne Ryan, Health Dept. and Amy Germano, Fairfield Public Schools.