

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

Fall 09 Update #12 - 11/16/09

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's Updates

- **Influenza Activity is here now and has continued to increase over the past few weeks in the schools and workplaces in the community and throughout the state. It should be assumed that most of the flu activity being seen is the 2009 H1N1 influenza. Those who are at high risk or parents of high-risk children should take what they feel are the appropriate precautions based upon your or your child's individual risk.** For CDC action steps for parents of high risk children go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/parentfactsheet3.htm>
- The Health Department has received H1N1 vaccine, for more information on availability go to H1N1 Vaccination Update on the Town of Fairfield website www.fairfieldct.org.
- Eleven reports of confirmed H1N1 cases in school-age children were received by the Health Department today. A total of 35 reports of confirmed H1N1 in school aged children have been received this school year. It is of note that the testing related to these cases occurred between 10/19/09 and 11/4/09. Schools with confirmed H1N1 cases include: Dwight, Mill Hill, Sherman, Jennings, Osborn, Stratfield, North Stratfield, Burr, Riverfield, Roger Ludlow Middle School, ECC, St. Thomas, Fairfield Prep and Fairfield Country Day. While these schools have had children who have had laboratory H1N1 confirmation testing, per CDC and State guidance most physicians are not performing confirmatory testing for individuals with flu like symptoms. Since the 2009 H1N1 Influenza is the predominant circulating flu at this time and that flu-like activity has been seen by school nurses in 25 public and private schools in Fairfield, it should be assumed that 2009 H1N1 influenza is in all the schools.
- Today's reports indicate that one public school reported absenteeism at or above 10% this past Friday. Riverfield School is at 10.4% (which is up from 10.1% the previous day but down from a peak of 11.8%). All other public schools remain or have dropped below 10% absenteeism. The average absenteeism for all public schools on Friday was 6.1% (6.0% Thursday, 6.3% Tuesday, 6.8% on Monday and 6.7% last Friday) with a range of 2.9% - 10.4% (previous range was 2.9%-10.1%).
- Reports received from private schools indicate that one private school is above 10% absenteeism: Unquowa School is at 15% down from a high of 21% last week.
- Unquowa School was closed this past Friday due to several factors. The school was experiencing high absenteeism due to flu activity and Friday was a non-academic half-day consisting of "Grandparents Visiting Day" and a performance for those visiting. The school administration made the decision to close being that many of the performers were expected to be absent, parents had called indicating that due to high absenteeism they did not want to bring the grandparents that day and that it was a half-day of non-academic activities.
- Since the beginning of the school year till the week ending 11/13/09 school nurses have seen a total of 230 children in their offices with flu like symptoms, 48 of those occurred this past week (up from 44 the previous week and down from 77 seen two weeks ago). These were seen in 26 different public and private schools. See Table 4. Flu-like illness is also being seen in the universities and preschools in Fairfield.

- Weekly absenteeism by school level showed higher levels than the previous year. Elementary level dropped from last week while middle and high school levels slightly increased from the previous week. See Table 3 below.
- Increasing 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.

Recent Updates

- The CT Department of Public Health indicated that CT's second wave of the H1N1 pandemic has started.
- Roger Ludlow Middle School and Tomlinson Middle School were seeing elevated absenteeism in those students who have returned from the Washington DC and Nature's classroom trips.
- A Guilford high school was closed on 10/26 and 27 and a Middletown middle school closed 10/28-30 both due to absenteeism above 40%. Region 10 School District (Harwinton/Burlington) closed for three days (10/28–30) due to district wide absenteeism of 27%
- The Health Department currently has no seasonal flu vaccine. See the Seasonal and H1N1 Vaccination updates on the Town of Fairfield website at www.fairfieldct.org for the most up to date 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.**
- The State of CT's Flu Watch Website (www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch) is update each Tuesday currently reports Fairfield having a total of 51 confirmed H1N1 case to date, with 38 occurring prior to 8/29/09 (Wave 1) and 13 being reported since 8/30/09 (Wave 2).

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 have and or 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 for the latest 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

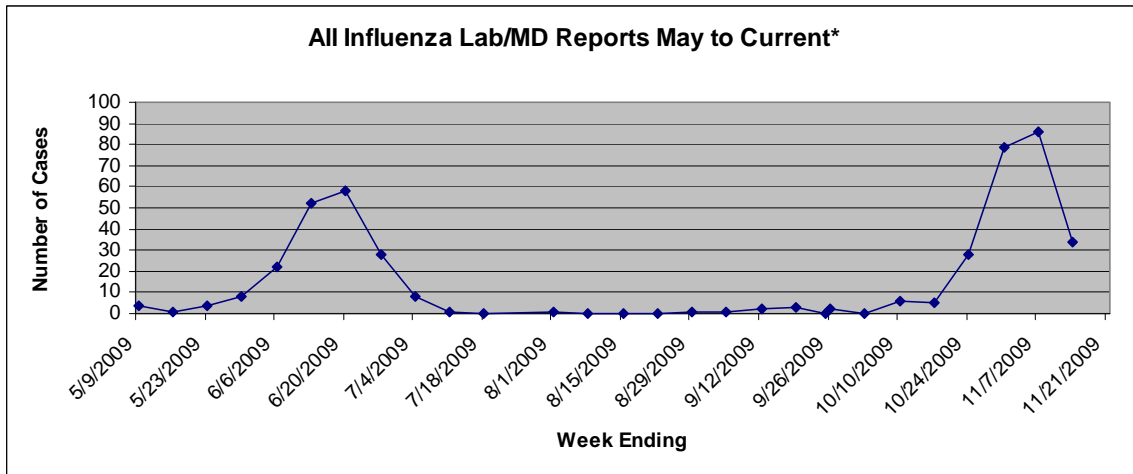
Number of 2008-2009 Seasonal Influenza Reports in Fairfield*	
Week:	Number of Influenza Cases:
Dec. 7-Dec. 13	1
Dec. 14-Dec. 20	0
Dec. 21-Dec.27	2
Dec. 28-Jan. 3	1
Jan. 4-Jan. 10	2
Jan. 11-Jan. 17	8
Jan. 18-Jan. 24	12
Jan. 25-Jan. 31	26
Feb. 1-Feb. 7	62
Feb. 8-Feb. 14	123
Feb. 15-Feb. 21	46
Feb. 22-Feb. 28	16
Mar. 1-Mar. 7	20

Mar. 8-Mar. 14	12
Mar. 15-Mar.21	11
Mar. 22-Mar. 28	2
Mar. 29-Apr. 1	2

Table 2

Spring 2009 to Current Number of All Influenza Reports in Fairfield* (includes confirmed H1N1 cases)	
Week:	No. of Influenza Cases:
May 3 rd -May 9 th	4
May 10 th -May 16 th	1
May 17 th -May 23 rd	4
May 24 th -May 30 th	8
May 31 st -June 6 th	22
June 7 th -June 13 th	52
June 14 th -June 20 th	58
June 21 st -June 27 th	28
June 28 th -July 4 th	8
July 5 th -July 11 th	1
July 12 th -July 18 th	0
July 19 th -July 25 th	0
July 26 th -August 1 st	1
August 2 nd -August 8 th	0
August 9 th -August 15 th	0
August 16 th -August 22 nd	0
August 23 rd -August 29 th	1
August 30 th -September 5 th	1
September 6 th -September 12 th	2
September 13 th -September 19 th	3
September 20 th -September 26 th	2
September 27 th -October 3 rd	0
October 4 th -October 10 th	6
October 11 th -October 17 th	5
October 18 th -October 24 th	28
October 25 th -October 31 st	79
November 1 st -November 7 th	86
November 8 th – November 13 th	34

Graph of above data in Table 2

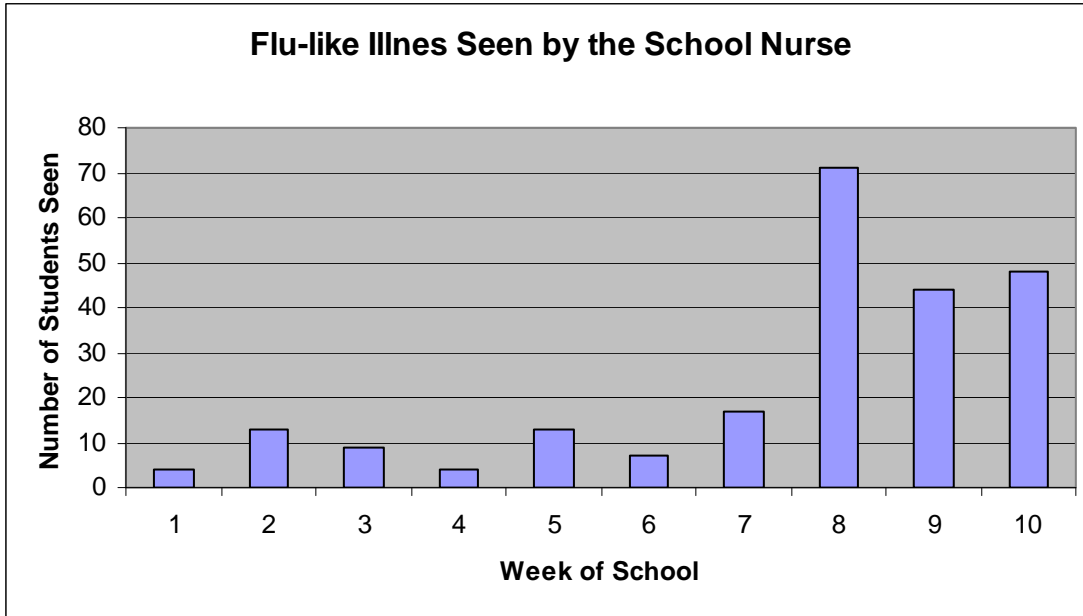


*These are reports from physicians of in-office rapid tests or other laboratory reports based on the date testing was conducted. Many more cases of influenza are typically experienced in the community than are reported, many individuals do not seek medical care or do not have tests conducted. **These 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 - 2 weeks

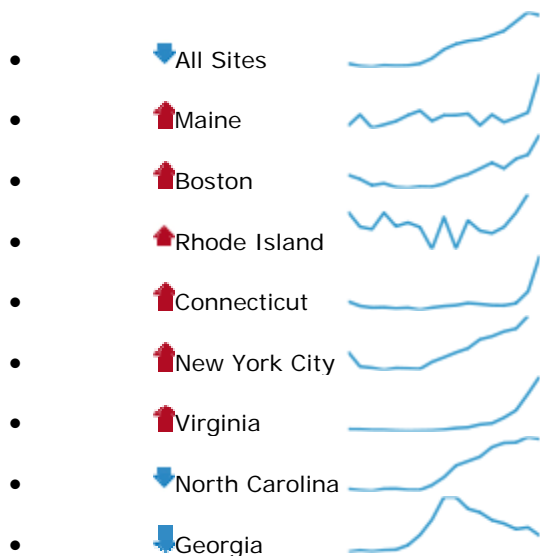
Year	Week of	School Level	Percent Absent
09-10	11/09/2009 to 11/13/2009	Elementary/Pre-K	6.4
09-10	11/09/2009 to 11/13/2009	Middle	7.4
09-10	11/09/2009 to 11/13/2009	High	5.4
Previous Week			
09-10	11/02/2009 to 11/06/2009	Elementary/Pre-K	7.4
09-10	11/02/2009 to 11/06/2009	Middle	6
09-10	11/02/2009 to 11/06/2009	High	4.9
Previous Year's Data			
08-09	11/10/2008 to 11/14/2008	Elementary/Pre-K	3.5
08-09	11/10/2008 to 11/14/2008	Middle	3.5
08-09	11/10/2008 to 11/14/2008	High	4.6
Previous Week			
08-09	11/03/2008 to 11/07/2008	Elementary/Pre-K	3
08-09	11/03/2008 to 11/07/2008	Middle	3.3
08-09	11/03/2008 to 11/07/2008)	High	3.5

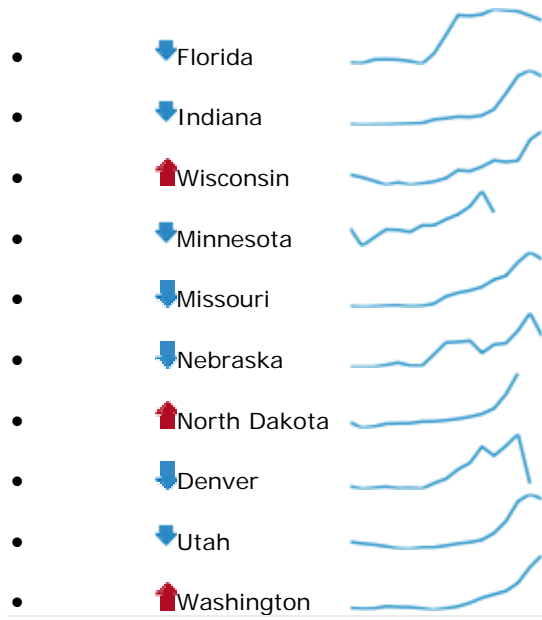
Table 4



To provide residents with an interesting visual representation of influenza activity in Connecticut as it compares to other states and cities please see the graph below. The graph below shows the general trend of activity over the past four months.

Percent of Emergency Department Visits For Influenza-Like Illness - Current Season (last 4 months) Last updated: 10/29/2009





% change from last week to current week:

↑ < 10%
 ↑ > 10%
 ↓ < 10%
 ↓ > 10%
 ■ stable (-1% - 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.