

FLU EXPRESS



Flu Express is a weekly report produced by the Respiratory Disease Office of the Centre for Health Protection. It monitors and summarizes the latest local and global influenza activities.

Local Situation of Influenza Activity (as of Oct 19, 2016)

Reporting period: Oct 9 – 15, 2016 (Week 42)

- The latest surveillance data showed that the local influenza activity has decreased as compared to the previous week but was still above the baseline level.
- The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has collaborated with the Hospital Authority (HA) and private hospitals to reactivate the enhanced surveillance for severe seasonal influenza cases (i.e. influenza-associated admissions to intensive care unit (ICU) or deaths) among patients aged 18 or above since Sep 23, 2016. As of Oct 19, 44 severe cases (including 32 deaths) were recorded. Separately, no new cases of severe paediatric influenza-associated complications or deaths (aged below 18 years) were recorded in the same period.
- Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that seasonal influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications are recommended to receive influenza vaccine for personal protection.
- In the coming 2016/17 season, subsidised vaccination will be provided for children aged 6 months to under 12 years, elderly aged 65 years or above, pregnant women, persons with intellectual disabilities and recipients of Disability Allowance (DA). The Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) 2016/17 will be launched on October 20. For details of VSS, please refer to the webpage (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/46107.html). In addition, the eligibility of free vaccination will be expanded to include children aged 6 years to under 12 years from families receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or holding valid Medical Waiver Certificates and DA recipients who are existing clients of public clinics and hospitals (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/116/45099.html>). The Government Vaccination Programme (free vaccination) will be rolled out in phases in early November and details will be announced in due course.

Influenza-like-illness surveillance among sentinel general outpatient clinics and sentinel private doctors, 2012-16

In week 42, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) was 6.1 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 5.3 recorded in the previous week (Figure 1, left). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private doctors was 49.0 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 52.2 recorded in the previous week (Figure 1, right).

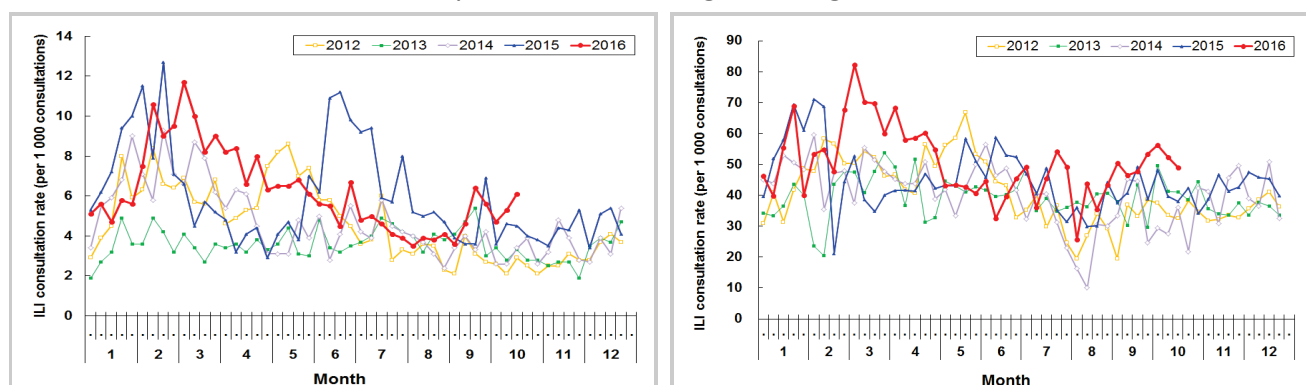


Figure 1 ILI consultation rate at sentinel GOPCs (left) and private doctors (right), 2012-16

Laboratory surveillance, 2012-16

Among the respiratory specimens received in week 42, 347 (10.33%) were tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses, including 341 (10.15%) influenza A(H3), 4 (0.12%) influenza B and 2 (0.06%) influenza C. The percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses last week was 10.33%, which was lower than 12.22% recorded in the previous week (Figure 2). Among the influenza viruses detected in the last week, the proportions of A(H3), B and C were 98.3%, 1.2% and 0.6% respectively.

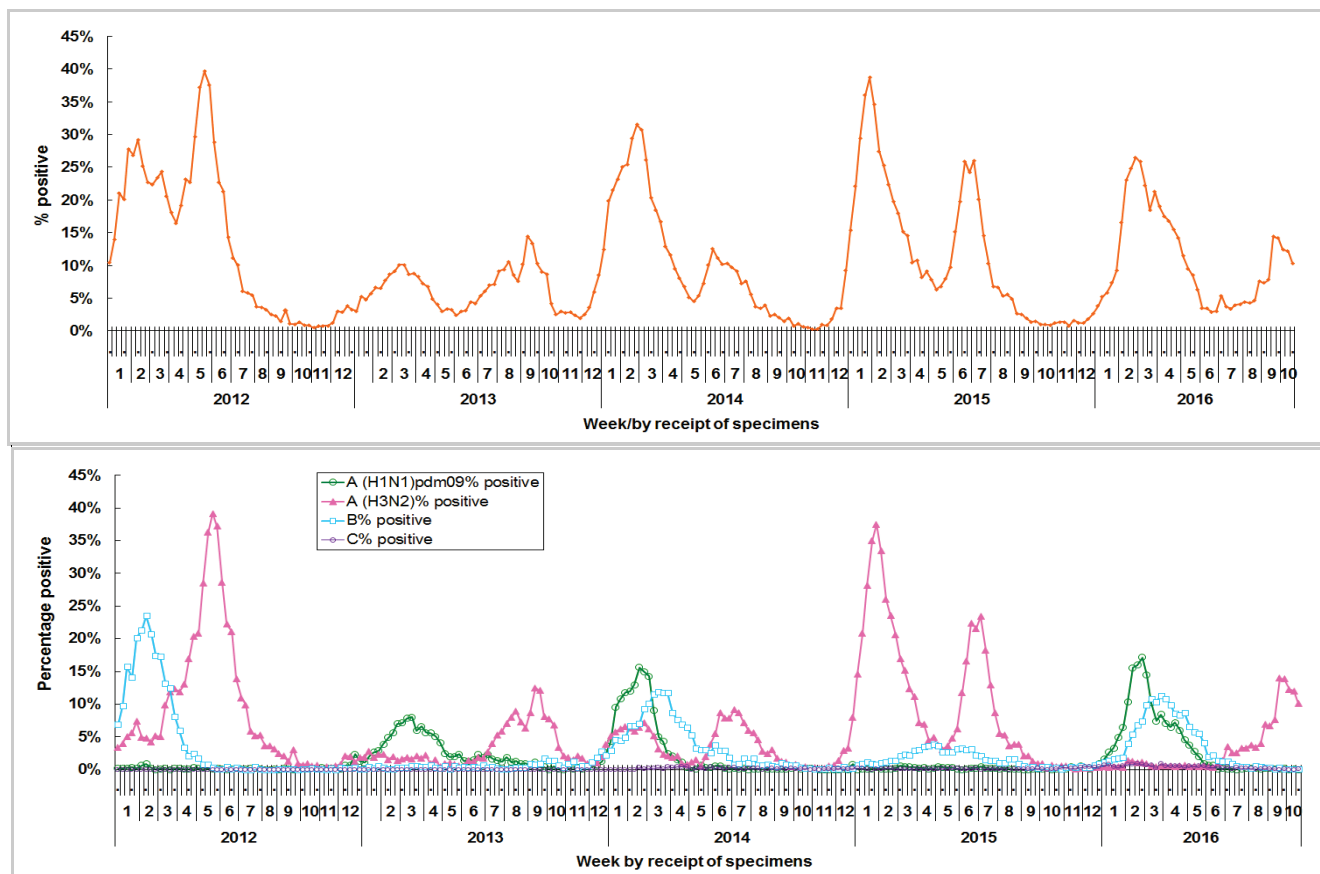


Figure 2 Percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for influenza viruses, 2012-16 (upper: overall positive percentage, lower: positive percentage by subtypes)

Influenza-like illness outbreak surveillance, 2012-16

In week 42, 5 ILI outbreaks occurring in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 18 persons), as compared to 17 outbreaks (affecting 108 persons) recorded in the previous week (Figure 3). In the first 4 days of week 43 (Oct 16 to 19, 2016), 5 institutional ILI outbreaks were recorded (affecting 19 persons).

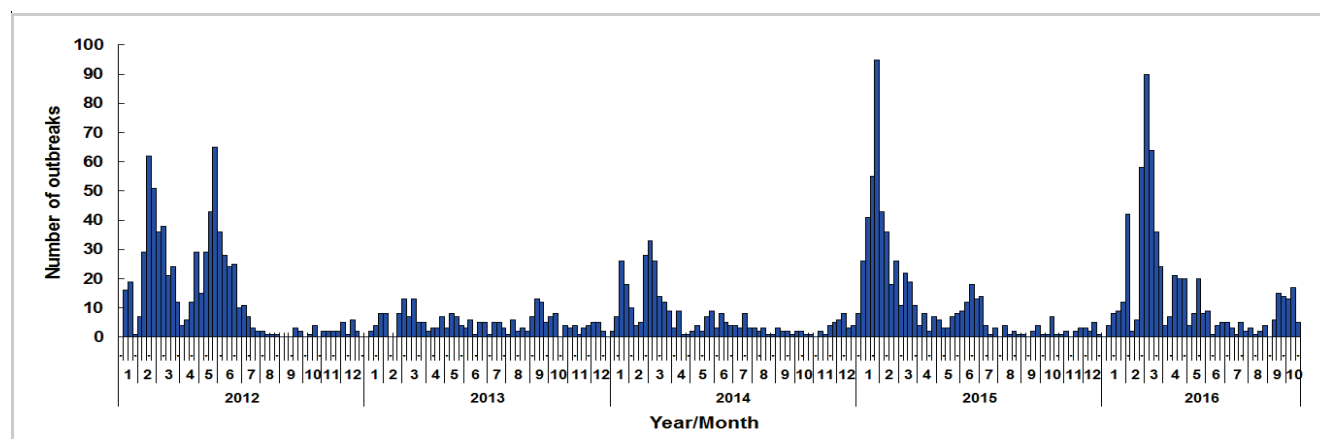


Figure 3 ILI outbreaks in schools/institutions, 2012-16

Rate of influenza-like illness syndrome group in accident and emergency departments, 2012-16[#]

In week 42, the rate of the influenza-like illness syndrome group in the accident and emergency departments (AED) was 158.7 (per 1,000 coded cases), which was lower than the rate of 159.3 in the previous week (Figure 4).

#Note: The influenza-like illness syndrome group includes codes such as influenza, upper respiratory tract infection, fever, cough, throat pain, and pneumonia.

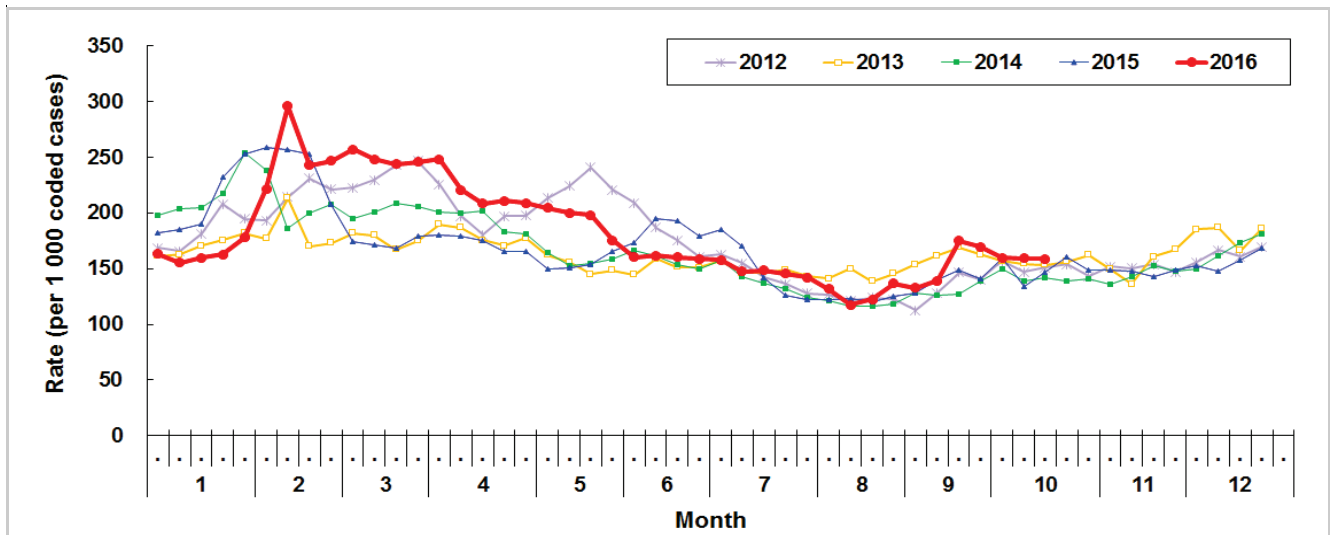


Figure 4 Rate of ILI syndrome group in AED, 2012-16

Influenza associated hospital admission rates and deaths in public hospitals based on discharge coding, 2012-16

In week 42, the admission rates in public hospitals with principal diagnosis of influenza for persons aged 0-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-64 years and 65 years or above were 0.64, 0.32, 0.05 and 0.51 cases (per 10,000 people in the age group) respectively, as compared to 1.13, 0.36, 0.04 and 0.86 cases in the previous week (Figure 5). Weekly number of deaths with any diagnosis of influenza is also shown in Figure 5.

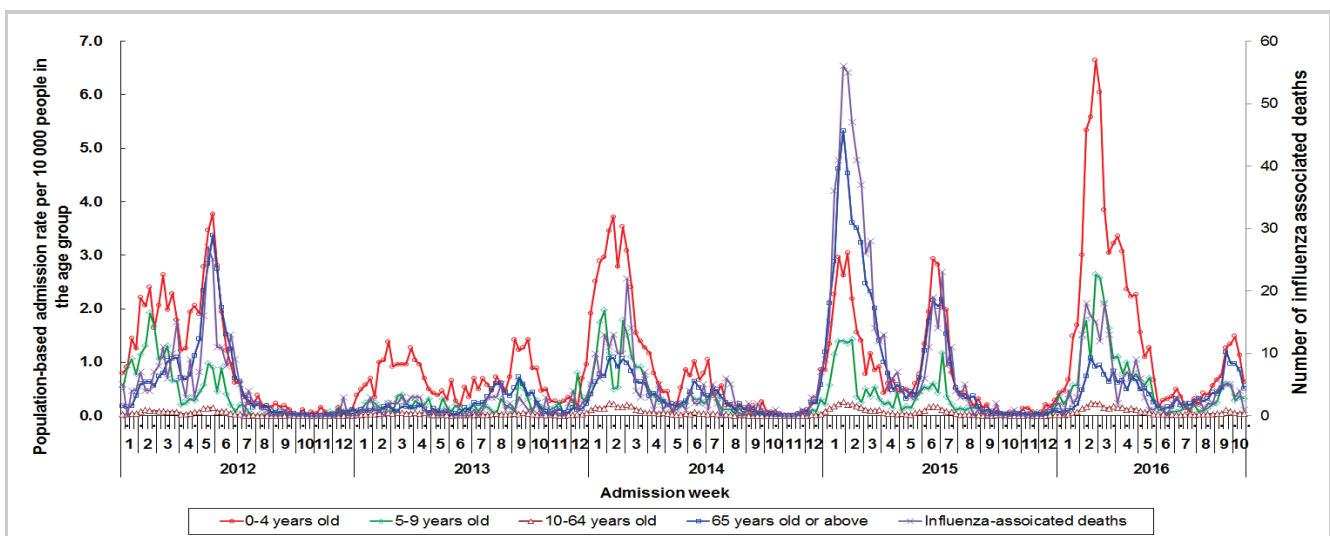


Figure 5 Influenza associated hospital admission rates and deaths, 2012-16

Fever surveillance at sentinel child care centres/ kindergartens, 2012-16

In week 42, 0.75% of children in the sentinel child care centres/ kindergartens (CCC/ KG) had fever (38°C or above) as compared to 0.81% in the previous week (Figure 6).

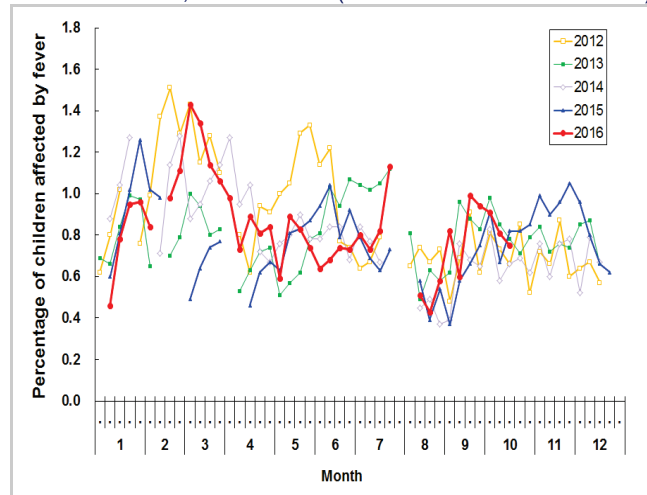


Figure 6 Percentage of children with fever at sentinel CCC/ KG, 2012-16

Fever surveillance at sentinel residential care homes for the elderly, 2012-16

In week 42, 0.09% of residents in the sentinel residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) had fever (38°C or above) as compared to 0.13% in the previous week (Figure 7).

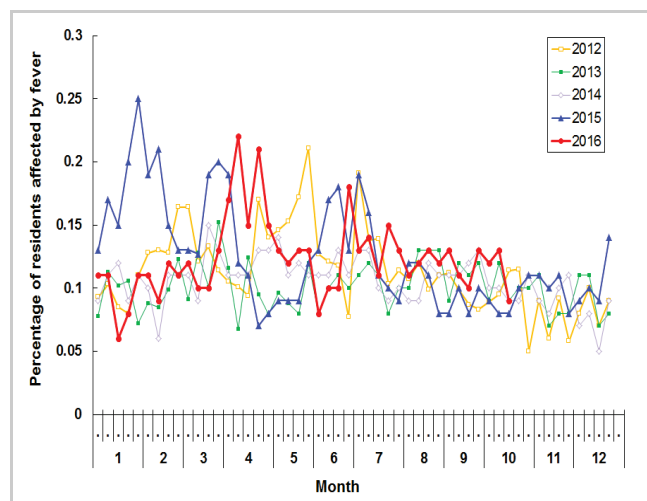


Figure 7 Percentage of residents with fever at sentinel RCHE, 2012-16

Influenza-like illness surveillance among sentinel Chinese medicine practitioners, 2012-16

In week 42, the average consultation rate for ILI among Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) was 1.23 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations as compared to 1.64 recorded in the previous week (Figure 8).

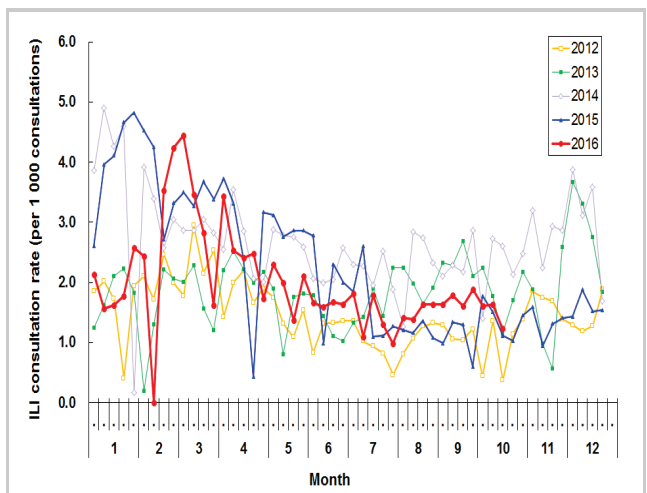


Figure 8 ILI consultation rate at sentinel CMP, 2012-16

Surveillance of severe influenza cases

(Note: The data reported are provisional figures and subject to further revision)

- Since activation of the enhanced surveillance for severe influenza infection on Sep 23, 2016, a total of 44 adult severe cases (including 32 deaths) were recorded (as of Oct 19)(Figure 9). Among them, 38 patients had infection with influenza A(H3N2), one patient with influenza B, one patient with influenza C and four patients with influenza A pending subtype. No paediatric severe cases were reported in the same period. In the last influenza season in early 2016, 409 adult cases (including 211 deaths) and 27 paediatric cases (including 3 deaths) were filed.

Enhanced surveillance for severe seasonal influenza (Aged 18 years or above)

- In week 42, 16 cases of influenza associated ICU admission/death were recorded, in which 11 of them were fatal. In the first 4 days of week 43 (Oct 16 to 19, 2016), 11 cases of influenza associated ICU admission/death were recorded, in which 10 of them were fatal.

Surveillance of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death (Aged below 18 years)

- In week 42 and in the first 4 days of week 43 (Oct 16 to 19, 2016), there were no new reports of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death.

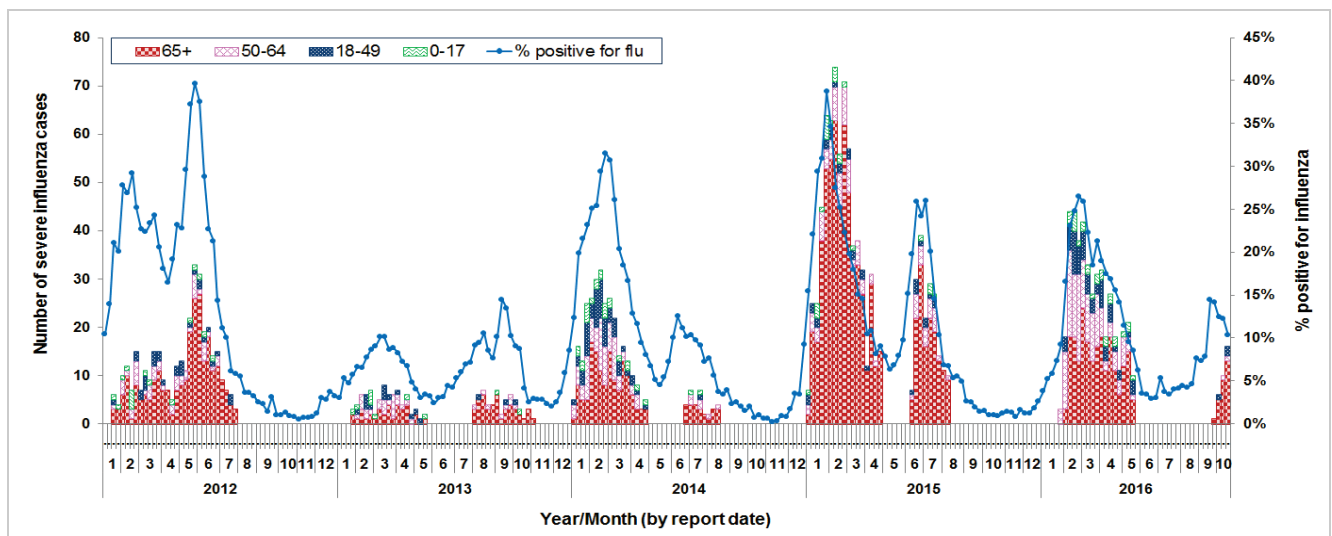


Figure 9 Weekly number of severe influenza cases recorded during influenza seasons, 2012-2016

Remark: The surveillance system for severe influenza cases aged 18 years or above was only activated intermittently during influenza seasons.

.Surveillance of oseltamivir resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus infection

- In week 42 and the first 4 days of week 43 (Oct 16 to 19, 2016), there were no new reports of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus infection. There are totally 48 reports of oseltamivir resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus detected in Hong Kong since 2009.

Global Situation of Influenza Activity

- In the United States (week ending Oct 8, 2016), the influenza activity remained at a low level. The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI was 1.1%, which was below the national baseline of 2.2%.
- In Canada (week ending Oct 8, 2016), the influenza activity was at interseasonal levels with the majority regions reporting no influenza activity.
- In the United Kingdom (week ending Oct 9, 2016), the influenza activity remained low.
- In Europe (week ending Oct 9, 2016), the influenza activity has remained at low levels.
- In Australia (week ending Sep 30, 2016), the influenza activity has continued to decline following a seasonal peak in early September. Influenza A(H3N2) continued to be the dominating circulating virus nationally.
- In New Zealand (week ending Oct 2, 2016), the influenza activity was very low among consultation-seeking patients nationwide.

Sources:

Information have been extracted from the following sources when updates are available: [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), [Public Health England](#), [Joint European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention-World Health Organization/Flu News Europe](#), [Australian Department of Health](#) and [New Zealand Ministry of Health](#).