

Sentinel Surveillance Sites

The Kentucky Department for Public Health relies on a network of doctors' offices, hospitals and health departments, also known as sentinel sites, to help track the level of influenza activity in the state and to identify which strains of the flu are circulating in Kentucky.

Participation by sentinel sites is voluntary, and sites are located across the state. These sites collect data and report influenza-like illness (ILI) cases according to age groups (0-4 years; 5-24 years; 25-64 years and ≥ 65 years) every week. Local health departments report ILI data (collected from medical practices, hospitals, long term care centers and absenteeism in schools) to the Kentucky Department for Public Health through the Influenza-like Illness Network (ILINet). Health care providers report this information directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the U.S. Influenza Sentinel Providers Surveillance Network. This sampling represents only a small percentage of influenza cases for the state, but contributes to the ongoing assessment of flu activity in Kentucky and helps determine the level of flu activity in the state each week. It cannot, however, be used to ascertain how many people have become ill with influenza during the influenza season.

What is Influenza-Like Illness?

Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as fever (temperature of $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ (37.8°C) and a cough and/or a sore throat in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.

Influenza Activity levels

States report influenza activity levels as no activity, sporadic, local, regional or widespread. These levels are defined as follows:

- **No Activity** – No laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza and no reported increase in the number of cases of ILI.
- **Sporadic** – Small numbers of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases or a single laboratory-confirmed influenza outbreak has been reported, but there is no increase in cases of ILI.
- **Local** – Outbreaks of influenza or increases in ILI and recent laboratory confirmed influenza in a single region of the state.
- **Regional** – Outbreaks of influenza or increases in ILI and recent laboratory confirmed influenza in at least two but less than half the regions of the state with recent laboratory evidence of influenza in those regions.
- **Widespread** – Outbreaks of influenza or increases in ILI cases and recent laboratory-confirmed influenza in at least half the regions of the state with recent laboratory evidence of influenza in the state.

Together, the five categories of influenza surveillance are designed to provide a picture of influenza activity for both the state and the nation.

Contact Information:

Questions about ILINet reporting or surveillance: Kentucky Department for Public Health, Immunization Section, 502-564-4478.