

IN THE NEWS: Seasonal Influenza

CDC has released a Health Advisory from their Health Alert Network:
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00409.asp>

Due to the rapid rise in cases of flu and recent past history when the predominantly circulating flu strain was H3N2, the CDC wants to remind health care providers (HCP) to keep influenza in mind as a diagnosis when presented with signs and symptoms that could be flu
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/symptoms.htm> .

H3N2 often causes more severe cases of flu with more complications, particularly in those over 65 years and in younger children. These two groups typically have more hospitalizations and deaths than other age groups when H3N2 is the dominant seasonal flu. Because of this, the CDC encourages the use of antivirals when patients are suspected or confirmed to have flu and are in high risk groups
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm, have severe, complicated or progressive flu, and even for those that do not fall into high risk groups, but present within the first two days of illness, based on health care provider judgement.

Furthermore, last year when H3N2 was also the predominant circulating flu, the vaccine was only 32% effective (B flues and A H1N1 typically protect at 40-60% levels). A repeat of low effectiveness is likely as long as H3N2 is dominating this flu season. Note: The H3N2 strain was included in both years' vaccines but H3 viruses are notoriously less effective since they are more likely to have slight changes in the strain (called antigenic shifts) that are then less matched.

The WHO (World Health Organization) has released the following update:
http://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/latest_update_GIP_surveillance/en/

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