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News story

UK flu levels according to PHE statistics: 2019 to 2020

Regular updates on seasonal flu levels during the winter season 2019 to 2020.

Published 19 December 2019

Last updated 30 January 2020 — see all updates

From:

Public Health England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>)



Latest update

The latest Public Health England ([PHE](#)) report published at 2pm on 30 January 2020, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, although activity is decreasing.

Over the last week, [GP](#) consultations with flu-like illness decreased from 10.3 per 100,000 to 9.0 per 100,000 and continue to stay below baseline levels.

Flu hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates also decreased from 1.39 per 100,000 to 1.05 per 100,000 and 0.13 per 100,000 to 0.10 per 100,000 respectively – suggesting flu is having a low impact on hospital admissions as well as intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

The report also shows that in week 4, 2020, statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death had been seen overall in England.

Currently, 71.6% of adults over 65, 43.1% of adults with a long-term health condition, 42.8% of pregnant women, 41.8% of 3-year-olds and 41.1% of 2-year-olds have received the flu vaccine.

At the same time last year, 71.2% of adults over 65, 46.7% of adults with a long-term health condition, 44.8% of pregnant women, 45.0% of 3-year-olds and 43.0% of 2-year-olds were vaccinated.

Previous updates

Thursday 23 January 2020

The latest Public Health England ([PHE](#)) report published at 2pm on 23 January 2020, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK, although activity is decreasing.

Over the last week, [GP](#) consultations with flu-like illness decreased from 14.7 per 100,000 to 10.3 per 100,000 and are now below baseline levels.

Flu hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates also decreased from 2.43 per 100,000 to 1.44 per 100,000 and 0.21 per 100,000 to 0.13 per 100,000 respectively – suggesting flu is having a low impact on hospital admissions as well as intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

The report also shows that in week 3, 2020, no statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death had been seen yet overall or by age group in England this season.

Currently, 71.4% of adults over 65, 42.5% of adults with a long-term health condition, 42.4% of pregnant women, 40.9% of 3-year-olds and 40.3% of 2-year-olds have received the flu vaccine.

At the same time last year, 70.8% of adults over 65, 46.2% of adults with a long-term health condition, 44.5% of pregnant women, 44.6% of 3-year-olds and 42.7% of 2-year-olds were vaccinated.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, Head of Flu, Public Health England said:

Although flu activity is decreasing, it is still circulating in the community.

The best defence against flu is the vaccine and it's not too late to protect yourself and your family. Anyone who is eligible and has not yet been vaccinated should contact their [GP](#) or pharmacist without delay.

Uptake among 2 to 3-year-olds is behind where we would like to see it, so we are calling on parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible.

Current evidence suggests the vaccine is a good match for the main strain of flu that is circulating.

Thursday 16 January 2020

The latest Public Health England ([PHE](#)) report published at 2pm on 16 January 2020, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-national-flu-reports-2019-to-2020-season>), but there are signs it has peaked.

Over the last week, flu had a low impact on hospital admissions as well as intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

Flu hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates both decreased from 4.33 per 100,000 to 2.43 per 100,000 and 0.36 per 100,000 to 0.21 per 100,000 respectively.

[GP](#) consultations with flu-like illness also decreased, from 16.6 per 100,000 to 14.7 per 100,000, but remain above baseline levels.

The report also shows that in week 2, 2020, no statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death had been seen yet overall or by age group in England this season.

Despite the decrease in flu activity, the virus is still circulating in the community and PHE and NHS England are strongly encouraging GPs and pharmacies to continue to vaccinate as many people as possible, as uptake remains lower than last year.

At this stage of the flu season, providers would usually begin to wind down their vaccination efforts.

However, vaccination clinics began later this season due to a delay in the World Health Organization's recommendation on influenza strains and manufacturing delays with the nasal spray for children. All supply issues have now been resolved.

Currently, 71.1% of adults over 65, 41.8% of adults with a long-term health condition, 41.9% of pregnant women, 39.4% of 3-year-olds and 39.2% of 2-year-olds have received the flu vaccine.

At the same time last year, 70.5% of adults over 65, 45.7% of adults with a long-term health condition, 44.2% of pregnant women, 44.2% of 3-year-olds and 42.4% of 2-year-olds were vaccinated.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, Head of Flu, Public Health England said:

Although flu shows signs of peaking, it is still circulating in the community.

The best defence against flu is the vaccine and it's not too late to protect yourself and your family. Anyone who is eligible and has not yet been vaccinated should contact their GP or pharmacist without delay.

Uptake among 2 to 3-year-olds is behind where we would like to see it, so we are calling on parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible.

Current evidence suggests the vaccine is a good match for the main strain of flu that is circulating.

Thursday 9 January 2019

The latest Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm on 9 January 2020, shows that seasonal flu activity remains high (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-national-flu-reports-2019-to-2020-season>) but is decreasing in secondary care. Vaccine uptake in some groups continues to be lower than last year, but it is still available at GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Over the last week, flu hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates both decreased from 6.23 per 100,000 to 4.42 per 100,000 and 0.40 per 100,000 to 0.37 per 100,000 respectively. However, flu is still having a moderate impact on hospital admissions as well as intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

GP consultations with flu-like illness increased from 12.9 per 100,000 in week 52 to 16.6 per 100,000 in week 1 of 2020, although we expect to see numbers down in week 52 due to bank holidays.

The report also shows that in week 1, 2020, no statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death had been seen yet overall or by age group in England this season.

Currently, 70.7% of adults over 65, 41.0% of adults with a long-term health condition, 41.4% of pregnant women, 37.6% of 3-year-olds and 37.7% of 2-year-olds have received the flu vaccine.

At the same time last year, 69.9% of adults over 65, 45.1% of adults with a long-term health condition, 43.8% of pregnant women, 43.5% of 3-year-olds and 41.9% of 2-year-olds were vaccinated.

This data should be interpreted with caution due to delays in reporting during the New Year period.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, Head of Flu, Public Health England said:

Uptake among 2 to 3-year-olds is behind where we would like to see it, so we are calling on parents to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible.

Current evidence suggests the vaccine is a good match for the main strain of flu that is circulating.

To reduce the risk of spreading flu, use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands often with warm water and soap, and bin used tissues as quickly as possible. Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

Friday 3 January 2019

The latest PHE report published at 2pm today, Friday 3 January 2019, shows that seasonal flu continues to circulate across the UK.

Over the last week, flu hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates both decreased from 7.14 per 100,000 to 6.29 per 100,000 and 0.40 per 100,000 to 0.38 per 100,000 respectively - suggesting flu is having a moderate impact on hospital admissions as well as intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

In week 51, GP consultations with flu-like illness increased from 16.0 per 100,000 to 19.4 per 100,000, remaining above baseline levels.

The report also shows that in week 50, 2019, no statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death had been seen yet overall or by age group in England this season.

Up to week 51, 70.2% of adults over 65, 40.1% of adults with a long-term health condition, 40.9% of pregnant women, 35.2% of 3-year-olds and 35.7% of 2-year-olds had received the flu vaccine.

This data should be interpreted with caution due to delays in reporting during the Christmas period.

Dr Suzanna McDonald, National Programme Lead for Influenza, Public Health England said:

The best defence against flu is the vaccine and it's not too late to protect yourself and your family. Anyone who is eligible and has not yet been vaccinated should contact their GP or pharmacist without delay.

19 December 2019

The Public Health England (PHE) report published at 2pm on 19 December 2019 shows that seasonal flu is circulating.

The statistics show that over the last week, hospitalisation and intensive care admission rates have increased 5.13 to 6.85 per 100,000 and from 0.23 to 0.35 per 100,000 respectively – suggesting flu is having a moderate impact on hospital admissions and intensive care unit and high dependency unit admissions.

GP consultations with flu-like illness have also increased, from 13.1 to 16.0 per 100,000.

The main subtype circulating is influenza A(H3N2), which initial evidence suggests is matched to the strain included in this season's vaccine. No statistically significant excess all-cause mortality by week of death has been seen yet overall or by age group in England this season.

As flu levels ramp up, PHE has activated the Catch It, Bin It, Kill It campaign to help prevent the spread of the highly infectious disease.

The digital and print campaign encourages the public to carry tissues and use them to catch coughs and sneezes, bin the used tissues as soon as possible and then wash their hands to kill the germs.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, Head of Flu, Public Health England said:

“Flu season has now started and so it’s really important that people get their flu vaccine as soon as possible to ensure they are protected against this potentially very serious illness. The initial evidence suggests the vaccine is a good match for the main strain of flu that is circulating.

“Flu is very infectious and spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.

“To reduce the risk of spreading flu, use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands often with warm water and soap, and bin used tissues as quickly as possible. Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.”

Seasonal flu usually circulates for several weeks each year.

The intensity of circulation depends upon the underlying population immunity, the circulating viruses and external factors such as the weather.

Alongside other diseases like norovirus that normally increase during winter, seasonal flu puts extra pressure on the NHS every year.

The weekly national flu reports (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-national-flu-reports-2019-to-2020-season>) track seasonal flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses in the UK. Currently, 68.7% of adults over 65, 37.1% of adults with a long-term health condition, 37.9% of pregnant women, 32.3% of 3-year-olds and 33.7% of 2-year-olds have received the vaccine.

As of the end of November, 61.5% of healthcare workers and 43.6% of children from reception to year 6 (4 to 11 years) were vaccinated.

Published 19 December 2019

Last updated 30 January 2020 + show all updates

1. 30 January 2020
Added latest update.
2. 23 January 2020
Added latest update.
3. 16 January 2020
Added latest update.
4. 9 January 2020
Added latest update.
5. 3 January 2020
Added latest update.
6. 19 December 2019
First published.

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- Annual flu reports (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-flu-reports>)
- Annual flu surveillance and vaccine uptake reports: pre-release access list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-influenza-surveillance-and-vaccine-uptake-reports-pre-release-access-list>)
- Sources of UK flu data: influenza surveillance in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sources-of-uk-flu-data-influenza-surveillance-in-the-uk>)

- Deaths registered in England and Wales: 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/deaths-registered-in-england-and-wales-2018>)

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