



EPI WATCH

Monthly Epidemiology Newsletter

March 2019

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County

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Division of Disease Control and Health Protection

Disease Reporting

To report diseases and clusters of illness:

Phone: (727) 824-6932

Fax: (727) 484-3865
(excluding HIV/AIDS)

To report HIV/AIDS
by mail: Surveillance
Room 3-138
205 Dr. MLK Jr St. N
St. Petersburg, FL 33701



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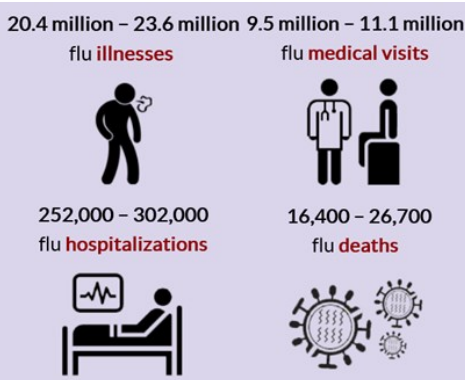
Our local not-for-profit hospitals and the department of health want to hear from you!

We want to understand our community health concerns to make new improvements.

We encourage you to take 15 minutes to fill the survey located [here](#).

Update: 2018 - 2019 Influenza Activity in the U.S.

CDC estimates that, from Oct. 1 2018, through Feb. 23 2019, there have been*:



*These estimates are preliminary

Influenza activity continues to increase and is predominantly higher in the South/Southeast part of the U.S.¹. As of February 23, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have reported more than 1,000 positive influenza tests nationwide, based on data provided by participating public health laboratories¹. Furthermore, Emergency Department (ED) visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) increased by 4.8% above the national baseline^{1,2}. All U.S. regions are reporting elevated out-patient ILI activity, with over 20% of the specimens collected being positive and predominantly influenza type A². For the week of February 17 to February 23, the CDC reported seven influenza-associated pediatric deaths nationwide. From September 28, 2018 to February 2, there have been a total of 28 influenza-associated pediatric deaths nationwide.

Currently, the number of Pinellas ED visits has plateaued compared to previous weeks; however, these visits are still elevated for the season. Influenza activity continues to be moderate for Pinellas County when compared to previous seasons. No pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported this season.

Individuals are encouraged to get the flu vaccine as ILI activity levels are considerably high for most areas in the U.S. according to the latest [CDC ILI map](#). Influenza symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, fatigue and muscle/body aches. Antiviral drugs can be a treatment option for the virus. Those who are at high risk of developing flu-related complications (e.g., children younger than five, adults 65 years of age or older, pregnant women) should visit/contact their health care providers.

For more information on influenza, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html>

References:

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>. Accessed on February 2019.

²Blanton, L., Dugan, V.G., Elal, A.I.A., Alabi, N., Barnes, J., Brammer, L., Budd, A.P., Burns, E., Cummings, C.N., Garg, S. and Garten, R. (2019). Update: Influenza Activity—United States, September 30, 2018–February 2, 2019. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 68(6), 125.

CDC Request for Measles Support

From January 1 to February 28, the CDC has reported a total of 206 confirmed measles cases. As a result, CDC is requesting health care providers' help to ensure patients are up to date on MMR vaccine and promote education on the importance of the vaccination. Education tools and resources can be found below:

- [Talking with Parents about Vaccines for Infants](#)
- [Preparing for Questions Parents May Ask](#)
- [Infant Immunization FAQs](#) in English and Spanish
- [Measles fact sheet](#) for parents in English and Spanish



Do you know CDC's Guidelines for Patient Evaluation, Diagnosis & Management?
www.cdc.gov/measles/HCP/



THINK MEASLES

Youth Tobacco Use in the U.S. (2017-2018)

2018 Tobacco Product Use Among U.S. High School Students

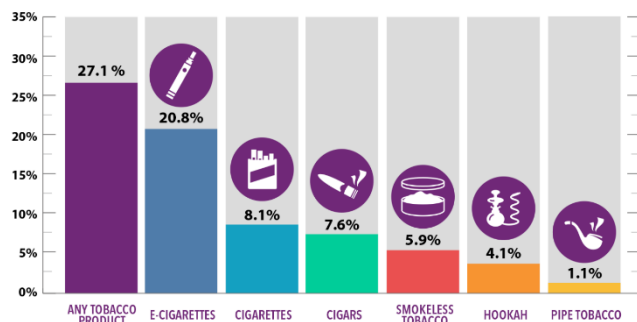


Figure obtained from CDC¹

The CDC reports that tobacco product use in youth increased over 30% from 2017 to 2018¹. The main increase was observed in the use of e-cigarettes, where the CDC's latest report shows that high school students using e-cigarettes increased from 11% to 20% and middle school students increased from 3.3% to 4.9%^{1,2}. This increase was not observed in any of the other tobacco products, such as cigarettes, tobacco, cigars, hookah and pipe tobacco. Nevertheless, both e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes are the top two tobacco products used among high school and middle school students.

In 2018, the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey data showed that 26.3% of students (ages 11-17) ever tried e-cigarettes and 11.6% were currently using e-cigarettes statewide. These numbers are higher than those observed from 2016, where 24.5% reported ever using e-cigarettes and 15.7% indicated they were currently using e-cigarettes. Survey results show that Florida is following the nation's trend as published by the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)³. Pinellas County showed higher percentages than the state, where 29.9% reported ever trying e-cigarettes, and 19.8% indicated they were currently using e-cigarettes (ages 11-17). To read more about Pinellas County's report, you can visit the [2018 Pinellas County Youth Tobacco Survey](#).

The Department of Health in Pinellas County is working towards a tobacco free Florida. Communities are working together with the Tobacco Free Coalition of Pinellas County (TFC) and Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) to prevent and end youth from smoking and help smokers to quit. To learn more about these initiatives, please visit [here](#).

To read and learn more Tobacco Free Florida, please visit <http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/>

References:

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Progress Erased: Youth Tobacco Use Increased During 2017-2018. Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0211-youth-tobacco-use-increased.html>. Accessed on February 2019.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Tobacco use by Youth is Rising. Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/youth-tobacco-use/>. Accessed on February 2019.

³Food and Drug Administration (FDA). 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey. Webpage: <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm625917.htm>. Accessed on February 2019.

Outbreak of Salmonella Infections Linked to Pet Hedgehog



The CDC is currently investigating a *Salmonella* outbreak that has been associated to contact with pet hedgehogs. Since September 2018, the CDC has reported a total of 11 cases from eight different states; only one person has been hospitalized¹. The last case was on December 25, 2018; however, cases acquired after this date may not have been reported. The strain, *Salmonella Typhimurium*, was identified from samples obtained from three hedgehogs¹.

Typical symptoms of *salmonella* infection include diarrhea, fever and stomach cramps (for 12 to 72 hours after exposure). Symptoms usually last four to seven days and infections can be treated with antibiotics^{2,3}. The CDC recommends pet owners to wash their hands

properly, play safely with them (e.g., no kissing or snuggling pet hedgehogs) and to clean all of their playing areas, toys and supplies outside of their living area. Visit [here](#) for more practices on how to stay healthy around your pet. The CDC also provides additional resources on their Healthy Pets, Healthy People website for [veterinarians](#) and [health care providers](#) on the risk for zoonotic diseases in pets and disease spreading between animals and owners.

If you develop symptoms of *salmonella* infection, contact your health care provider.

For more information on this topic, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/s0125-outbreak-salmonella-hedgehogs.html>

References:

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Outbreak of Salmonella Infections Linked to Pet Hedgehogs. Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium-01-19/index.html>. Accessed on February 2019.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Questions and Answers. Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/general/index.html>. Accessed on February 2019.

³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Timeline of Reported Cases. Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium-01-19/epi.html>. Accessed on February 2019.

Health Advisories and Travel Notices

[Leptospirosis in Fiji](#)

[Polio in Indonesia](#)

[CDC Current Outbreak List](#)

[UPDATE: Ebola in Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

Select Reportable Diseases in Pinellas County

Disease	Pinellas		YTD Total		Pinellas County Annual Totals		
	February 2019	February 2018	Pinellas 2019	Florida 2019	2018	2017	2016
A. Vaccine Preventable							
Measles	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Mumps	0	1	0	5	2	2	0
Pertussis	1	1	4	53	32	35	18
Varicella	1	3	8	153	67	24	74
B. CNS Diseases & Bacteremias							
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	2	1	2	9	9	7	7
Meningococcal Disease	0	1	0	4	1	0	0
C. Enteric Infections							
Campylobacteriosis	25	15	55	716	264	207	137
Cryptosporidiosis	3	1	7	89	34	40	27
Cyclosporiasis	0	0	0	1	4	6	5
<i>E. coli</i> Shiga Toxin (+)	0	0	1	96	14	9	3
Giardiasis	6	4	6	171	41	45	41
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Listeriosis	0	0	0	2	1	0	2
Salmonellosis	3	9	11	650	225	278	188
Shigellosis	3	1	4	263	40	26	19
D. Viral Hepatitis							
Hepatitis A	52	1	95	424	113	0	2
Hepatitis B: Pregnant Woman +HBsAg	2	2	2	68	14	25	28
Hepatitis B, Acute	5	5	12	111	51	51	68
Hepatitis C, Acute	1	3	3	24	37	30	49
E. VectorBorne/Zoonoses							
Animal Rabies	0	4	0	22	4	2	4
Rabies, possible exposure	6	8	21	682	130	140	131
Chikungunya Fever	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Dengue	0	0	0	21	0	0	2
Eastern Equine Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	0	0	0	0	12	17	11
Malaria	1	0	1	3	3	0	0
West Nile Virus	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Zika Virus Disease	0	0	3	12	1	5	n/a
F. Others							
Chlamydia	277	337	633	n/a	4422	4188	4133
Gonorrhea	84	112	183	n/a	1439	1574	1566
Hansen's Disease	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Legionellosis	0	3	2	59	26	23	19
Mercury Poisoning	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Syphilis, Total	20	25	43	n/a	438	382	400
Syphilis, Infectious (Primary and Secondary)	12	15	28	n/a	190	160	188
Syphilis, Early Latent	8	9	22	n/a	158	128	146
Syphilis, Congenital	0	1	0	n/a	2	5	2
Syphilis, Late Syphilis (Late Latent; Neuro-syphilis)	0	0	0	n/a	88	89	64
Tuberculosis	2	0	3	n/a	n/a	28	31
<i>Vibrio</i> Infections	1	0	1	29	6	11	8

*YTD up to February 28, 2019. n/a = not available at this time

Reportable diseases include confirmed and probable cases only. All case counts are current and provisional as of March 6, 2019. Data is collected from the Merlin Reportable Disease database, surveillance systems maintained at the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County, and Florida CHARTS <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/default.aspx>. STD data in STARS is continually updated. Please note, data from the previous month takes up to an additional month or more to be correctly updated.