Influenza on the Rise Across the United States

The CDC reports widespread flu activity in 24 states.

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu activity peaks between December and February in the United States. Now, the agency has announced in a recent report that the influenza virus is widespread in 24 states, with elevated episodes of the contagious respiratory illness in 19 states and New York City, reports HealthDay.

The states with high levels of flu activity are Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

While influenza A strain H1N1 is the most common type, investigators found that H3N2 (another A strain) is responsible for last year's severe flu season and is currently more common in the Southeast.

"There's still a lot more flu season to come," said Lynnette Brammer, the lead researcher on CDC's domestic influenza surveillance team. "I expect activity to continue for several more weeks. Anybody who hasn't been vaccinated should go and get vaccinated."

The agency advises that parents should get all their kids vaccinated for the flu, including children ages 6 months to 5 years. Additionally, those at high risk of developing flu-related complications, such as adults 65 and older, pregnant women and people with medical conditions, should make getting the flu shot a top priority.

Experts caution that being inoculated doesn't mean individuals won't get the flu. But getting the vaccine reduces the severity of flu symptoms.

Not sure if you should get a flu shot? Click here.

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