In the State of Connecticut, for influenza, only PCR (polymerase chain reaction) results are reportable to the health department. The data shown in the figures of this report do not reflect the true number of influenza cases within the Central Connecticut Health District. The actual number of influenza cases is higher than reported due to the absence of positive antigen test results, and an unknown number of individuals have influenza but never get tested. **The purpose of this report is to provide the community with situational awareness of influenza surveillance in our community.**

A total of 337 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza have been reported to the Central Connecticut Health District between September 5th – December 4th, 2022. Of the 337 cases, 334 cases were typed as influenza A and 3 are unknown. Figure 1 below illustrates the sharp uptick in the number of reported laboratory-confirmed influenza cases since the beginning of November and continuously increases as we head into the holiday season. This weekly report has 122 more positive PCR influenza cases reported to CCHD. Data reported to CCHD is preliminary and subject to change.

**Figure 1**

![Laboratory Confirmed Influenza Cases Central Connecticut Health District September 4, 2022 - December 4, 2022](image-url)
Figure 2 below illustrates the increase in the number of laboratory-positive PCR influenza tests over time by age group.

To help protect yourself and your loves ones from illness due to flu and other circulating respiratory viruses, consider the following reminders from CDC:

- **Get vaccinated.**
- **Stay home when you are sick/keep your children home when they are sick.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces or objects at least daily.**

Here is a guide to every day preventive actions that can help fight germs, like flu: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/Everyday-Preventive-Actions_2021.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/Everyday-Preventive-Actions_2021.pdf)

**Figure 2**

The figure below (Figure 3) illustrates the trend in laboratory-confirmed PCR influenza cases by age group among residents living in the Central Connecticut Health District between January 1, 2019 – November 30, 2022. You can see that the school aged group is the most affected by influenza at this time (orange line). It’s also important to note that due to COVID-19 mitigation strategies put in place during May 2020 through January 2022, (for example masking in schools) practically eliminated the rate of influenza cases among school aged children. After the February 28, 2022, mask mandate lift in schools, the data reflects an increase in influenza rates through May; and again, skyrocket in the advent of the start of school.
In the following figure (Figure 4), the incidence of influenza of cases per 100,000 population among towns within the Central Connecticut Health District is shown to illustrate how common influenza the towns of: Berlin (population 20,436), Newington (population 30,014), Rocky Hill (population 20,115), and Wethersfield (population 26,008). For this reporting period, Berlin has the highest incidence rate of laboratory-positive PCR influenza tests in the district to date.

Figure 4
The true burden of influenza disease in our communities is likely higher than reported as the district only receives positive results from PCR tests. It is not required for laboratories to report positive antigen testing for influenza to the State or the District; in addition, not everyone with influenza will seek medical care, or receive testing through their provider.

As we enter the holiday season, you can take precautions now by getting vaccinated and wearing a mask if you plan on attending large gatherings. Contact our health educator, Betty Murphy, at (860) 785-8380 x 210 or email her at bmurphy@ccthd.org if you are interested in obtaining N95 masks for your protection.

For more information on influenza please visit:

CDC’s Key Facts on Influenza
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm#contagiousness