

For Health Professionals

Health Alerts

Health Alert Priority #111 - Influenza B Confirmed in Erie County - November 15, 2004

Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) has received the first report of laboratory confirmed Influenza B in Erie County for the 2004-2005 Flu Season. A long-term care facility in Cheektowaga reported 14 cases of Flu-like illness in a particular patient care area. Five specimens were collected on 11/11/04 for rapid antigen testing; 4 were negative, and 1 was positive. An additional specimen from the positive patient was confirmed for Influenza B (Direct Fluorescence Antibody) on 11/12/04. Results from culture testing for strain identification are pending. Healthcare providers and long-term care facilities are encouraged to report cases of Flu-like illness to the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-7697 and to follow the recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NOSOCOMIAL INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS

1. Ensure optimal influenza vaccination of patients, residents and employees.
2. Be on the alert for the occurrence of febrile respiratory illness in patients, residents or employees.
3. Ensure ill employees do not work until their illness resolves.
4. Report nosocomial respiratory outbreaks to the NYSDOH by completing the DOH-4018 form, at <https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/hpn/infeccontrol/infecreport.pdf>, and faxing it to the NYSDOH Infection Control Program at (518) 474-7381. Also report the outbreak, by telephone, to the ECDOH at (716) 858-7697.
5. Use the respiratory illness line list form, at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/infection/doh-496.pdf>, to record cases.
6. Test ill patients or residents for influenza via rapid antigen testing and culture.
7. If long-term care facilities identify influenza A or influenza B as the cause of an outbreak, NYSDOH strongly recommends the use of influenza antiviral prophylaxis to control the outbreak.
8. If a nosocomial influenza outbreak occurs in your facility, notify receiving facilities of the outbreak when transfers occur.

For complete recommendations, please refer to the NYSDOH's Influenza Prevention and Control 2004-05 recommendations, which are available on the NYSDOH public web site at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/infection/fluguide.htm>

Consultation regarding control of nosocomial influenza outbreaks is available from NYSDOH epidemiologists located in the Western Regional Office at (716) 847-4503.

For additional information and weekly statewide influenza updates, please refer to the NYSDOH's website at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/flu/index.htm>

If you have additional questions, please contact your NYSDOH Regional Office at the number listed above, the Regional Epidemiology Program at (518) 473-4439, or the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-7967.