

**Tennessee Department of Health**  
H1N1 Monitoring Questions & Answers

**Q: Why has the Tennessee Department of Health stopped reporting confirmed and probable novel H1N1 flu cases?**

**A:** Because of how widespread novel H1N1 flu is within the state and since only a small number of people with respiratory illness are tested for novel H1N1, confirmed and probable case counts do not reflect the true number of novel H1N1 flu cases in Tennessee, limiting the benefit of reporting these numbers on a regular basis.

**Q: What monitoring system will be used to replace counting confirmed and probable novel H1N1 flu cases?**

**A:** Instead of reporting confirmed and probable novel H1N1 flu cases, Tennessee has transitioned to using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's traditional flu surveillance systems to track the progress of both the novel H1N1 flu pandemic and seasonal influenza. These systems work to determine when and where flu activity is occurring, track flu-related illness, determine what flu viruses are circulating, detect changes in flu viruses and measure the impact of flu on hospitalizations and deaths in the U.S. This information is available on the department's H1N1 and seasonal flu Web pages.

**Q: What do CDC's traditional flu surveillance systems entail?**

**A:** Several systems are in place to address CDC's flu surveillance needs. These include:

1. Viral surveillance, which monitors
  - a. the percentage of specimens tested for influenza that are positive for influenza;
  - b. the types and subtypes of influenza viruses circulating;
  - c. resistance to influenza antiviral medications, and
  - d. the emergence of new strains
2. Sentinel physician surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI), which monitors the percentage of doctor visits for symptoms that could be the flu.
3. Hospitalization surveillance, which tracks numbers of hospitalizations with laboratory-confirmed flu infections among adults and children.
4. Summary of the geographic spread of flu, which tracks the number of states affected by flu and the degree to which they are affected.
5. Deaths from 122 cities that report the total number of deaths and the percentage of those that are coded as influenza or pneumonia.
6. The number of laboratory confirmed deaths from influenza among children.

Routine seasonal surveillance does not count individual flu cases, except in the case of pediatric influenza deaths, but instead, monitors activity levels and virus characteristics through this nationwide surveillance system.

**(more)**

**Q: How is CDC's traditional flu surveillance system reported?**

**A:** CDC's flu surveillance is reported in a weekly publication called *FluView*, available on the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>. The Epidemiology and Prevention Branch in the Influenza Division at CDC collects, compiles and analyzes information on flu activity in the U.S. year round to produce and publish *FluView* every Friday. Usually *FluView* is published from October through mid-May, but in light of the current novel H1N1 flu investigation, weekly publication of *FluView* is continuing over the summer months.

**Q: Why is *FluView* dated a week earlier than the date it is posted?**

**A:** Flu surveillance data collection is based on a reporting week that starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday of each week. Each surveillance participant is requested to summarize weekly data and submit it to CDC by Tuesday afternoon of the following week. Those data are then downloaded, compiled, and analyzed at CDC.

**Q: Will CDC expand its flu surveillance to track the progress of novel H1N1 flu for the upcoming flu season?**

**A:** CDC continues to work with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) to determine ways to enhance surveillance for novel H1N1 flu during the 2009-10 flu season. This will include more detailed information and easier to understand graphics. Also a subset of sites reporting ILI data, deaths, and laboratory data through CDC's traditional influenza surveillance systems have moved from weekly to daily reporting.