

Seqirus Media Monitoring

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Seqirus mentions

Elderly patients worried about staggered release of flu jab this winter

Flu vaccines for the elderly have been staggered for release across Wales this year, causing delayed appointments for patients in Pembrokeshire. Members of the public from across the county have expressed worries about having to wait longer than expected to receive the annual jab this winter. Public Health Wales confirmed some patients had experienced delays because this year's supply of the flu vaccine for the elderly had been staggered between September and November.

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/17290307.elderly-patients-worried-about-staggered-release-of-flu-jab-this-winter/>

Number of flu jab recipients drops

Despite a Public Health England campaign urging at-risk groups to get the vaccination, and a new and more effective version of it now available, jab uptake for over-65s sits at 65.4% this year – a drop from last year's 69.1%. The uptake for pregnant women has been 40.8%, down from 43.1%. Deliveries of the new formula were phased this year, leading some surgeries to run out between deliveries; this may have discouraged some patients from receiving their jab.

<https://practicebusiness.co.uk/number-of-flu-jab-recipients-drops/>

Over 65s urged to get free flu vaccination before Christmas

People over the age of 65 in Staffordshire are being encouraged to take up the offer of a free flu vaccination before Christmas. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing Alan White said: "This year a more effective vaccine is being given to those aged 65 and over, which is proven to give better protection against flu for people of this age. We want as many people who are eligible for a free vaccine to take up the offer. It's not too late to book an appointment and ensure you are better protected, especially before Christmas when flu typically starts to circulate."

<http://www.staffordshirenewsroom.co.uk/65s-urged-get-free-flu-vaccination-christmas/>

Industry News

Medicines could be delayed at the UK/EU border for six months under a 'no-deal' Brexit, warns DHSC

In England, the government has warned the health and social care sector that medicines could be delayed at the UK border for a period of up to six months in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit. Mike Thompson, chief executive of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, said the new planning assumption "is stark" and warned that further stockpiling of medicines "is not the solution to this problem".

https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/20205878.article?utm_campaign=2482_PJ_daily_alert&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pharmaceutical%20Journal

Pandemic Influenza News

No new cases of H5N1 bird flu in humans reported since 2014

Vietnam has reported no new human cases of avian influenza A/H5N1 and the country has successfully controlled outbreaks of the H5N1 strain over the past five years, an agriculture official said. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development said the country had also co-ordinated with domestic and international organisations by sharing information and implementing

measures to cope with A/H7N9.

<https://vietnamnews.vn/society/health/481866/no-new-cases-of-h5n1-bird-flu-in-humans-reported-since-2014.html#7ajTtbmaRcDloggu.97>

Academic studies

Regular flu shots might save heart failure patients

Annual flu vaccination is regarded as a safe and low-cost way to improve survival rate among elderly heart failure patients, according to a new research. The findings, published in the journal *Circulation*, showed that flu vaccination was associated with an 18 per cent reduced risk of premature death and a 19 per cent reduction in both all-cause and cardiovascular death when compared with no vaccination.

<https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/12/12/2018/Regular-flu-shots-might-save-heart-failure-patients>

Additional sources: ([Granada Digital](#)) ([Free Malaysia Today](#)) ([Malay Mail](#)) ([Su Medico](#)) ([Pourquoi Docteur](#)) ([Le Quotidien du Medicin](#))

Study uncovers link between tube travel and spread of flu-like illnesses

Despite the commuter cold being a widely accepted concept, it has never been proven that public transport contributes to the spread of airborne infections. Now new research on the London underground commute has proven a link does exist. The study, published on December 4, 2018 in *Environmental Health*, will help to inform measures to control the spread of infectious disease. The team hopes that their findings will inform Government epidemic policies. Dr Goscé said: "Policy makers, in particular, should address the role potentially played by public transport and crowded events and avoid encouraging the attendance of such environments during epidemics."

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20181212/Study-uncovers-link-between-tube-travel-and-spread-of-flu-like-illnesses.aspx>

Additional sources: ([Metro.co.uk](#))

Pediatric influenza news

FSU study finds racial disparity among adolescents receiving flu vaccine

Black adolescents living in the U.S. tend to receive the flu vaccine at significantly lower rates than their white and Hispanic counterparts, according to Florida State University researchers. A new study, led by former FSU graduate student Noah Webb, along with current graduate student Benjamin Dowd-Arrow and Associate Professors of Sociology Miles Taylor and Amy Burdette, was recently published in *Public Health Reports*. "Our findings are important because black adolescents and young adults consistently have worse health profiles than white and Hispanic adolescents and young adults," Dowd-Arrow said.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20181211/FSU-study-finds-racial-disparity-among-adolescents-receiving-flu-vaccine.aspx>

Additional sources: ([Outbreak News Today](#))

Beating Flu This Winter Is Child's Play For Two And Three Year Olds

Flu is beginning to circulate in Wales and it poses the greatest risk to the most vulnerable in society, including very young children. It can be potentially dangerous for them, which is why parents are being encouraged to have them vaccinated. Children who are two or three can receive it free at their local GP surgery.

<https://wales247.co.uk/beat-flu-this-winter-is-childs-play-for-two-and-three-year-olds/>

Free children's flu vaccinations available in Slough this weekend

Free children's flu vaccinations will be available in Slough this weekend, for children who were not vaccinated at school already. Between 50 and 100 people die of flu each year in Slough, including young children. This is partly because of low vaccination rates

<https://www.sloughexpress.co.uk/gallery/slough/139422/free-children-s-flu-vaccinations-available-in-slough-this-week-end.html>

Over 65's influenza news

Column: 'If you are over 65 and you haven't already done so, ask your GP for a flu jab'.

West Dorset MP Oliver Letwin writes "Recently, the Chief Medical Officer has asked MPs to alert those of their constituents who are either themselves over the age of 65 or are regularly in touch with others of this age to the benefits and availability of free flu jabs." "here are good reasons to do so given the belief of the health chiefs that the new vaccine could reduce GP consultations due to flu by 30,000, hospitalisations by over 2,000 and prevent over 700 hospital deaths in England, alleviating some of the health burden that seasonal flu places on the population, workplaces and the NHS."

<https://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/17291152.column-if-you-are-over-65-and-you-havent-already-done-so-ask-your-gp-for-a-flu-jab/>

General Influenza News

Your brain hates the flu shot. Get one anyway

Matt Wallaert is a behavioral scientist. He writes about the way we think about the flu shot, and how to reframe that thinking so that more of us get vaccinated each year. "If humans were perfectly logical creatures, we'd all get flu shots [...] But in many ways, the flu shot violates our understanding of how medicine works in ways that tickle the irrational parts of our brains." "Our irrational brains can work both ways. In the same way that feelings of uncertainty can make you avoid the flu shot, feelings of love can help you get one"

<https://www.statnews.com/2018/12/12/brain-hates-flu-shot-get-one-anyway/>

Only \$46 Million Paid To Vaccinate Injured Patients During FY2019

Documented vaccine injuries are extremely rare, says the U.S. CDC. According to the CDC, from 2006 to 2016, for every 1 million doses of vaccine that were distributed, 1 individual was compensated. According to an investigational team's reporting, approximately 50 percent of all the new federal vaccine injury cases alleged a SIRVA, and have little or nothing to do with what was in the syringe. Both the CDC and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) told the I-Team investigators that most cases allege the vaccines were administered incorrectly, usually too high on the arm

<https://www.precisionvaccinations.com/total-payments-vaccine-injury-petitioners-reached-403-billion-dollars-november-30-2018>

Hartlepool health chiefs crack down on flu - with a '12 days of Flumas' message!

In England, health trust bosses are spreading an anti flu message to tie in with the 12 days of Christmas. The 12 days of Flumas campaign has been revealed by the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust which is urging staff and the public to get their flu jab this winter. The Flumas campaign explores the differing associated symptoms that people might experience with flu.

<https://www.hartlepoolmail.co.uk/news/health/hartlepool-health-chiefs-crack-down-on-flu-with-a-12-days-of-flumas-message-1-9487741>

Adult vaccination calendar published in Spain

In Spain, a vaccination calendar for adults has been published. It lists 8 vaccinations, including the flu. The calendar will start being implemented in January. Health execs believe that vaccinations are a low cost efficient way of keeping the population healthy. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone, however the calendar targets the over 65s in particular

<https://www.heraldo.es/noticias/aragon/2018/12/12/aragon-tiene-calendario-vacunas-adultos-1282502-300.html>

Pune medics advice yearly vaccinations to keep H1N1 at bay

Maharashtra has been witnessing a change in trend of the influenza H1N1 virus. "Every alternate year, the virus changes its pattern and comes in a stronger form. The next year, it is in a milder form, but in 2017 and 2018, the virus continued to stay strong and we recorded not only many positive cases, but also deaths in large number," said Dr Pradeep Awate, state head of epidemiology and infectious diseases expert. People are advised to get a yearly vaccination

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/pune-news/pune-medics-advice-yearly-vaccinations-to-keep-h1n1-at-bay/story-UU8d6fHhNGjLo4AglbGXHM.html>

Should Flu Vaccine Be Mandatory for Medical Staff?

In the U.S., an unidentified nurse who was allegedly fired for refusing a flu vaccine drew the attention of protesters, who rallied in support of what they said was a violation of her conscience protection rights. The news comes as the CDC recently reported that vaccination rates among healthcare workers have plateaued over the past 4 years at a meager 74% overall. Rates are highest — 95% — in workplaces that require vaccination.

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/906458>

Koreas hold working-level talks on health care

The two Koreas held working-level talks to share the latest data on influenza, paving the way for cooperation in the health and medical sector, the Seoul government said Wednesday. The meeting is the follow-up to an agreement between the Koreas last month to cooperate in preventing the spread of infectious diseases and exchange information on such diseases on a trial basis within this year.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20181212000765>

Why are NHS workers not keen on the flu jab?

A "remarkably low" number of NHS workers choose to have a free flu vaccine, prompting fears staff illness could put more pressure on already stretched services over winter. Health chiefs at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) have insisted they do "everything they can" to encourage staff to have the jab - however in 2017/18 just 60 per cent opted to have the injection. So far in 2018/19 just 40 per cent of staff have had a flu jab ahead of winter, leaving councillors "scratching their heads" over why uptake is so low.

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/health/why-are-nhs-workers-not-keen-on-the-flu-jab-1-8737072>

Why is the Correze (France) running out of flu vaccines?

In France, the Correze area is running out of flu vaccines, seemingly because the flu shot has been very popular this season. Pharmacies are having to help each other with stocks as vaccine makers aren't providing more. Twice as many people as last year have had their flu jab in pharmacies this season. Vaccine makers are offering to collect spare vaccines in other regions to deliver them to the regions where pharmacy based flu vaccinations are being trialled

https://www.lamontagne.fr/brive-la-gaillarde/sante/correze/2018/12/12/pourquoi-la-correze-est-a-court-de-vaccins-contre-la-grippe_13081053.html#refresh

NHS Tayside 'determined' to reach 60% target after 'huge leap' in staff flu jabs

NHS Tayside is "determined" to reach the government's target of 60% of staff having flu jabs. A rallying call to staff was issued after a report submitted to the health board revealed only 47% had been immunised. The figure was described by John McAllion, health spokesman for the Dundee Pensioners Forum, as a "ticking timebomb". But consultant gastroenterologist Dr Elaine Henry, who is clinical lead for unscheduled care and winter planning, said uptake numbers have almost trebled since 2016.

<https://www.eveningtelegraph.co.uk/fp/nhs-tayside-determined-to-reach-60-target-after-huge-leap-in-staff-flu-jabs/>

Flu season is back. Are you ready?

Jennifer Mensik, PhD, RN, FAAN, writes about the flu: "It is your ethical responsibility to get immunized as healthcare workers." "We all need to participate in herd immunity for those individuals who cannot become vaccinated because of a life-threatening illness. Beyond influenza deaths, the World Health Organization states immunization averts an estimated 2.5 million pediatric deaths a year." She debunks some flu vaccine myths and recommends courses that nurses can take on the topic of the flu

<https://www.nurse.com/blog/2018/12/12/flu-season-is-back-are-you-ready/>

Oregon Senator Proposing a Bill That Requires Every Inmate Talk To a Doctor About Flu Shots Each Year

Oregon Sen. Sara Gelser announced that she will propose a bill to require flu shots for every inmate in an Oregon prison in the 2019 legislative session. Gelser tweeted the draft of her bill. If passed, the proposed legislation would require the Oregon Department of Corrections to schedule an appointment with every prisoner to get a flu shot each year. The same requirement would apply to jails. Inmates could opt out of the appointments or decline the vaccine in writing.

<https://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2018/12/11/oregon-senator-proposing-a-bill-that-requires-every-inmate-talk-to-a-doctor-about-flu-shots-each-year/>

Flu shot survey reveals troubling findings

So far, more than 1,200 laboratory confirmed cases of the flu are reported in Pennsylvania this season. But that's not the really alarming number that's jumping out at health officials. The Pennsylvania Department of Health estimates as many as 2.4 million Pennsylvanians get the flu each year. Of those, up to 2,000 die from flu complications. That's plenty of reason to get a flu shot but as Eyewitness News Healthbeat Reporter Mark Hiller explains, apparently not everyone is getting the message.

<https://www.pahomepage.com/news/flu-shot-survey-reveals-troubling-findings/1653563836>

Burden of disease

Three More Flu Deaths Reported in San Diego County, Season Death Toll at 5

Three deaths due to flu complications were confirmed in San Diego County last week, bringing this flu season's death toll to five, county health officials announced Wednesday. All three had additional health problems and had not received this flu season's vaccination.

<https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2018/12/12/three-more-flu-deaths-reported-in-san-diego-county-season-death-toll-at-5/>

Additional sources: (Kusi.com) (NBC San Diego)

The flu is in parts of Southern Oregon

In Oregon, according to Jackson County Health and Human Services, influenza is now in Jackson and Josephine Counties. More cases of the flu have been reported in the valley, but Dr. Shames said we might have not peaked yet.

<https://kobi5.com/news/the-flu-is-in-parts-of-southern-oregon-91587/>

First lab-confirmed flu cases reported in London-Middlesex

In Canada, the Middlesex-London Health Unit is reporting the first local influenza cases in the region, though flu activity remains low. From Dec. 2 to Dec. 8, four lab-confirmed cases of influenza A were reported to the health unit, three of whom were hospitalized. Across the province, influenza A and B activity remains low, but rising.

<https://london.ctvnews.ca/first-lab-confirmed-flu-cases-reported-in-london-middlesex-1.4215265>

Flu season is beginning to hit the Stateline Area

Northern Illinois is seeing more flu cases compared to south central Wisconsin, according to the

Wisconsin Division of Public Health. Local public health officials are urging residents on both sides of the border to get a flu shot to guard against the sometimes-deadly virus. According to a weekly Wisconsin Division of Public Health influenza report for the week of Dec. 1, 32 percent of state residents have received the flu vaccine. In total, 37 percent of Wisconsin residents got the vaccine, according to the report

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/20181212/flu_season_is_beginning_to_hit_the_stateline_area

St. Luke's University Health Network sees 1st wave of flu hospitalizations — all in unvaccinated patients

In the U.S., Bethlehem, Pa.-based St. Luke's University Health Network has already seen seven flu-related hospitalizations this season, all of which occurred among individuals who skipped their flu shots. Jeffrey Jahre, MD, senior vice president of medical and academic affairs at St. Luke's, said some patients needed to be put on a ventilator or a heart-lung machine. "Almost inevitably, people who have gotten the vaccine rarely have the very severe complications in comparison to people who have not gotten the vaccine."

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/quality/st-luke-s-sees-1st-wave-of-flu-related-hospitalizations-all-in-unvaccinated-patients.html>

Massachusetts already seeing widespread flu activity

Early evidence suggests immune systems across Massachusetts will be taxed this flu season. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named Massachusetts the first state in the nation with widespread flu activity. "What widespread means is that we're seeing some indication of influenza virus throughout the state," said Dr. Lawrence Madoff, Department of Public Health. What is worrisome is that the Emergency Department at MGH is already seeing more flu patients this year than the same time last year.

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/massachusetts-already-seeing-widespread-flu-activity/887882113>

Everything you need to know about the 2018-2019 flu season

Massachusetts is the only state in the U.S. reporting widespread flu activity, according to the CDC. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's latest weekly flu report, published on December 7, rates of flu-like illness declined over the previous seven days. However, state health officials warn the rates are expected to rise as we head further into the flu season. People are being urged to get their flu shot if they haven't already.

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-2018-2019-flu-season/887881464>

After Oregon inmate dies of flu, her family sues the state for \$7.5 million

The family of a 53-year-old inmate who died from complications of the flu has filed a \$7.5 million lawsuit against the state of Oregon -- claiming that if prison officials had given the inmate a flu shot, she likely still would be alive today. The lawsuit faults prison officials for buying 519 preventative flu shots for a population of 1,645 inmates in preparation for last flu season, according to the suit.

<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2018/12/after-oregon-inmate-dies-of-flu-her-family-sues-for-75-million.html>

Flu Surveillance in Animals

Avian flu outbreak spurs Bulgaria imports ban

The Philippines has temporarily banned the importation of poultry products from Bulgaria due to reported outbreaks of avian influenza in the country. Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol issued a temporary ban on the importation of domestic and wild birds, including their products, originating from Bulgaria, after Damyan Iliev, a Bulgarian agriculture official, reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) several outbreaks of avian influenza. The outbreaks of H5N8 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus were found in two provinces of Bulgaria.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/avian-flu-outbreak-spurs-bulgaria-imports-ban/>

Bird flu alert in Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park

In India, even as hundreds of migratory birds have arrived in the water bodies and trees of Bhitarkanika National Park, a flu alert has been sounded by forest and veterinary officials. Precautionary measures have been taken to detect sick birds in the park and its nearby areas. Dr Takairi said forest and veterinary officials are keeping a watchful eye on the migratory birds as they are prone to carry H5N1 strain of avian influenza

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2018/dec/12/bird-flu-alert-in-bhitarkanika-1910446.html>

Avian influenza: 2018 and beyond

Avian influenza causes vast economic losses throughout the world. Since the emergence of the highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses, they have already become enzootic in some countries, infecting domestic and wild birds, and continue to cause outbreaks in poultry, as well as sporadic human infections. These viruses are diversifying genetically and antigenically, calling for new research developments towards better control of the disease

<http://www.thepoultrysite.com/articles/3860/avian-influenza-2018-and-beyond/>

News Scan for Dec 12, 2018

Iran's agriculture ministry has reported three more highly pathogenic H5N8 outbreaks in poultry, according to a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The detections occurred at three different locations in East Azarbayegan province in the country's far northwest, with start dates ranging from Nov 15 to Nov 19. Taken together, the virus killed 158 of 300 birds, and authorities culled the survivors as part of the outbreak response. The three outbreaks are classified as resolved.

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2018/12/news-scan-dec-12-2018>