

Communicable Disease - Influenza

Why Is This Important?

Influenza is a respiratory illness caused by strains of influenza A and B viruses. The strain of the virus may change annually. Globally influenza infects an estimated 5 to 10% of adults and 20 to 30% of children.¹ Rates are highest in children ages 5 to 9, but rates of serious illness and death are highest in children under 2 years, older individuals (65 years and above) and persons with underlying medical conditions.

Influenza infection can lead to medical complications, including pneumonia, and can further impair underlying medical conditions. It is estimated that, in a given year, an average of 12, 200 hospitalizations are related to influenza and approximately 3500 deaths are attributable to influenza. Influenza is ranked among the top 10 leading causes of death in Canada.¹

Crowded environments help spread influenza when the virus is circulating. Hand hygiene and cough etiquette help to prevent the spread. Annual [influenza vaccination](#) is the most effective way to prevent influenza and its complications. For other factors affecting reported rates see [About the Data](#).

What Is Being Done?

[Influenza immunization](#)

To Learn More:

[I got one! Influenza Vaccine Campaign](#)

[National Advisory Committee on Immunization Statement on Influenza 2016/15](#)

Highlights

One in five people with laboratory-confirmed influenza is hospitalized.

- For the past five years the number of influenza cases has increased, with influenza A being the leading strain (*Figure 1*).
- In 2015/16, a total of 682 cases of influenza were reported including 531 cases of influenza A and 151 cases of influenza B (*Figure 1*). All strains identified were protected against in the 2015/16 vaccine offered. H1N1 was the leading strain.
- Overall, 18.3% of individuals were hospitalized, including 100 cases of influenza A and 25 influenza B cases hospitalized (*Figure 2*).
- Rates were highest in the youngest and oldest age categories. See [Influenza rates and hospitalization](#).
- In 2014/15 the predominant strain was H3N2, which affected more seniors.
- Of those hospitalized in 2015/16, eighteen individuals required intensive care involving intubation and ventilation; these patients all had underlying medical conditions (not shown).
- Influenza immunization coverage is low among adults with underlying medical conditions and sub-optimal in seniors ([Influenza Immunization by Risk Group](#)).

Figure 1: Influenza Rates per 100,000 Population, Saskatoon Health Region, 2011 to 2015

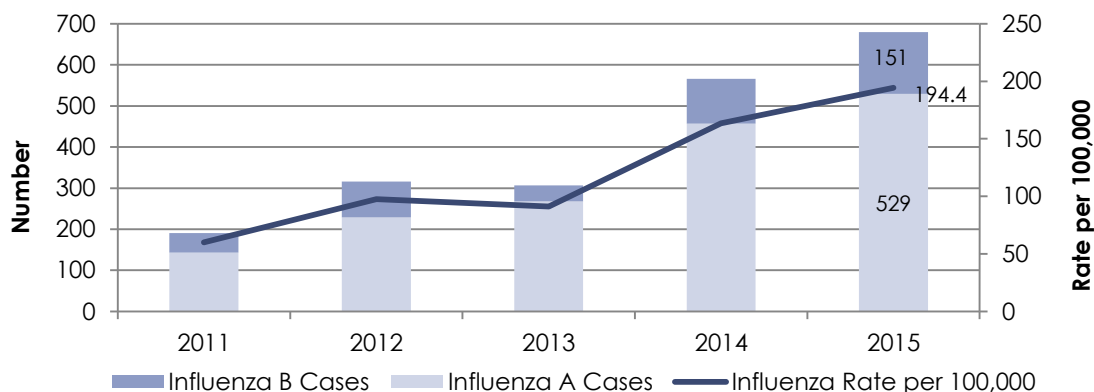
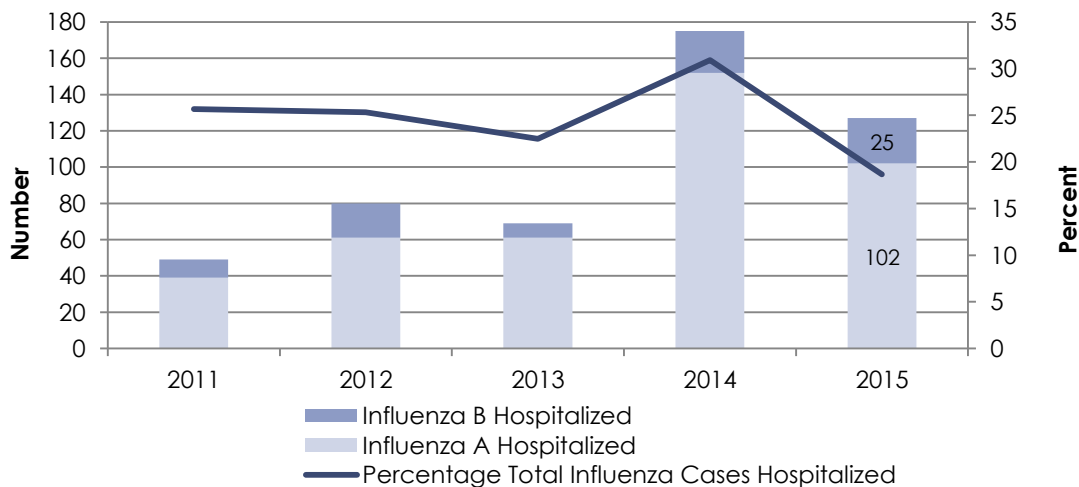


Figure 2: Influenza Cases Hospitalized, Saskatoon Health Region, 2011 to 2015



Influenza season is from Sept 1 to August 31st

Source: iPHIS