



HOUSTON EPI UPDATE

BUREAU OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

OFFICE OF SURVEILLANCE AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS



Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Fall Quarterly Issue

Contact Information

Double click to [visit](#) us on the web!

24/7 Disease Reporting
Phone: 832-393-5080
Fax: 832-393-5232

Address: 8000 N. Stadium Dr.,
Houston, Texas 77054

Reporting update

Middle East Respiratory Corona Virus (MERS-CoV) case definitions

A patient under investigation (PUI) is a person with the following characteristics:

- fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$, 100.4°F) and pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome;
AND EITHER
- history of travel from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula¹ within 14 days before symptom onset;

OR

- close contact with a symptomatic traveler who developed fever and acute respiratory illness (not necessarily pneumonia) within 14 days after traveling from countries in or **near** the Arabian Peninsula;

OR

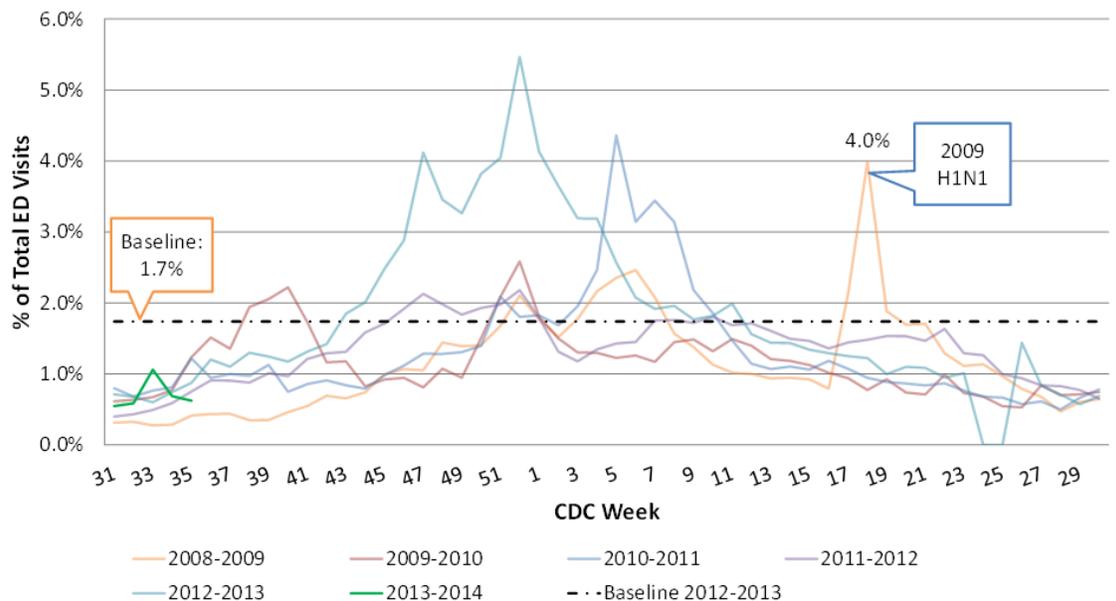
- is a member of a cluster of patients with severe acute respiratory illness (e.g. fever and pneumonia requiring hospitalization) of unknown etiology in which MERS-CoV is being evaluated

For MERS-CoV, health care providers should refer to the CDC, which is provided under **Helpful Links** on page 2.

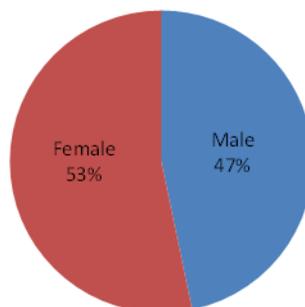
INFLUENZA SEASON BEGINS!

- The 2012-2013 influenza season had two peaks: one during CDC week 47 of 2012 and a second, higher peak on week 1 of 2013.
- During the peak seen in week 1 of 2013, close to 5.5% of all emergency department (ED) visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI).
- This represents the highest percentage of ILI seen in the past four years and is more than three times higher than the baseline, which is calculated by taking the average percentage of ILI visits during non-peak weeks over the past four years.
- Females represented the majority of ED visits due to ILI and those in the 0-4 year old age group were the most affected

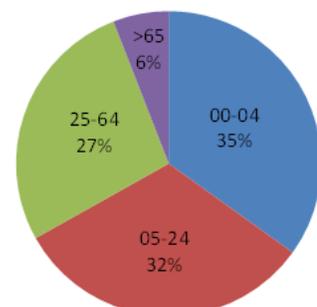
Comparison of ILI-Related ED Visits in Houston/Harris County



2012-2013 Flu Season Distribution of Cases by Gender



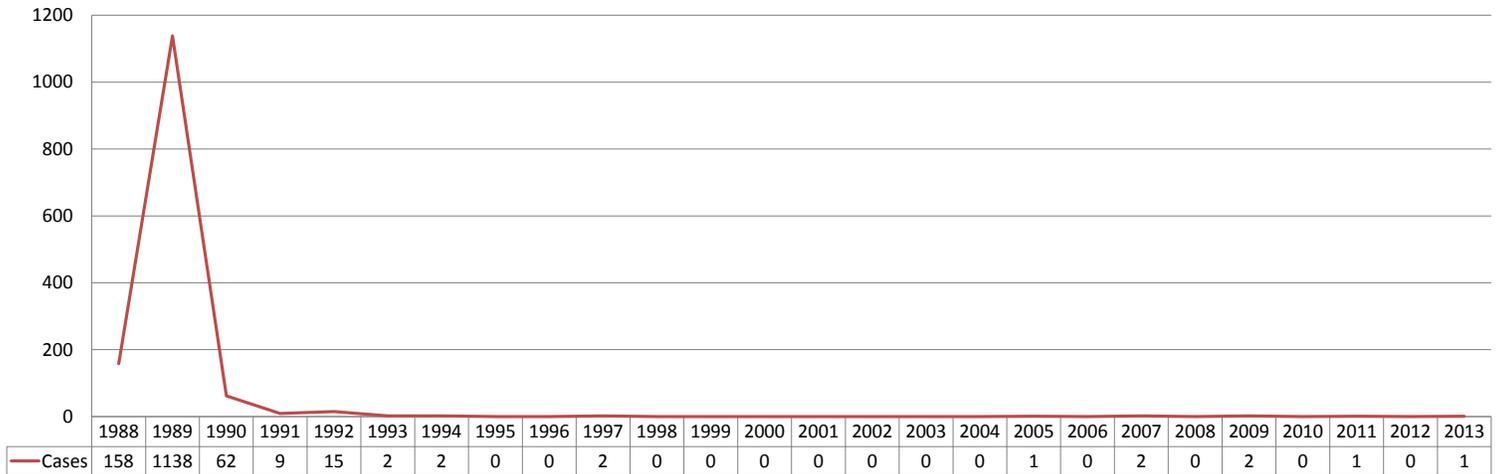
2012-2013 Flu Season Distribution of Cases by Age





MEASLES IN HOUSTON

Confirmed Measles Cases in Houston, TX, 1988-2013



HISTORY

Since the measles vaccine was introduced in 1964, cases in Houston have remained comparatively low, with the exception of a few epidemic periods. The last epidemic period in Houston was between 1988 and 1991 which mainly affected unimmunized preschoolers and under vaccinated foreign nationals living in the inner city. In 2012 there were no confirmed cases. During the first nine months of 2013 there was one confirmed case.

PROVIDERS' ROLE

As measles is highly contagious, the need for rapid diagnosis and identification of contacts is necessary in order to prevent widespread outbreaks. To avoid the possibility of spread, all patients who have had contact with the suspect patient are monitored until after the incubation period of 21 days. Providers are requested to provide line lists with contact information of all persons who were in the waiting room areas when the case patient was present, until two hours after the case patient left their office.

HDHHS' ROLE

The health department will send a health message to those persons exposed, alerting them to their exposure to measles and the need for two doses of the MMR vaccine if not already vaccinated. Exposed persons are asked to contact the Houston health department or call their physician if they should develop relevant symptoms. Symptomatic patients are urged not go to the doctor's office or a healthcare facility without first calling and informing them of their exposure to measles.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Helpful links:

Interim Guidance for [Infection Control](#) Within Healthcare Settings When Caring for Patients with Confirmed, Probable, or Cases Under Investigation of Avian Influenza A(H7N9) Virus Infection

Interim [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#) for Hospitalized Patients with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Upcoming events:

HDHHS invites you to participate in the [Wilted Woes Tabletop Exercise](#), a foodborne disease investigation exercise designed by the FDA.

The tabletop exercise is on November 22, 2013 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at Hiram-Clarke Multi-Service Center on 3810 West Fuqua, Houston, Texas 77045.

The tabletop exercise is FREE and interested parties are encouraged to double click to [register](#).