

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 changes annually. In Canada it is estimated that between 10 to 20% of the population becomes infected with influenza each year. Rates are highest in children aged 5 to 9 but rates of serious illness and death are highest in children aged < 2 years, older individuals (>65 years) 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 annually.¹ Crowded housing and public places help spread influenza when the virus is circulating. Hand and cough hygiene help to prevent the spread. Annual [influenza vaccination](#) is the most effective way to prevent influenza and its complications.² For other factors affecting reported rates see [About the Data](#).

What's Being Done:

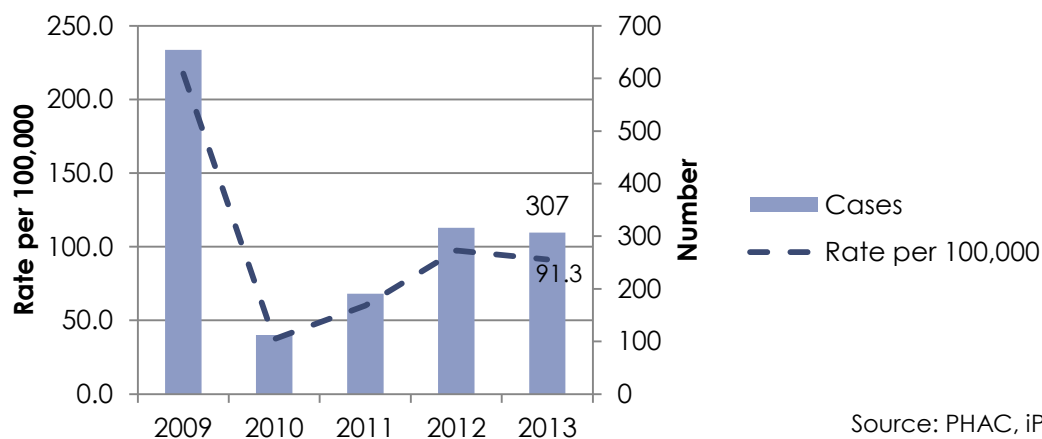
[Influenza immunization](#)

To Learn More: [I got one! Influenza Vaccine Campaign National Advisory Committee on Immunization Statement on Influenza 2014/15](#)

One in five persons with influenza is hospitalized

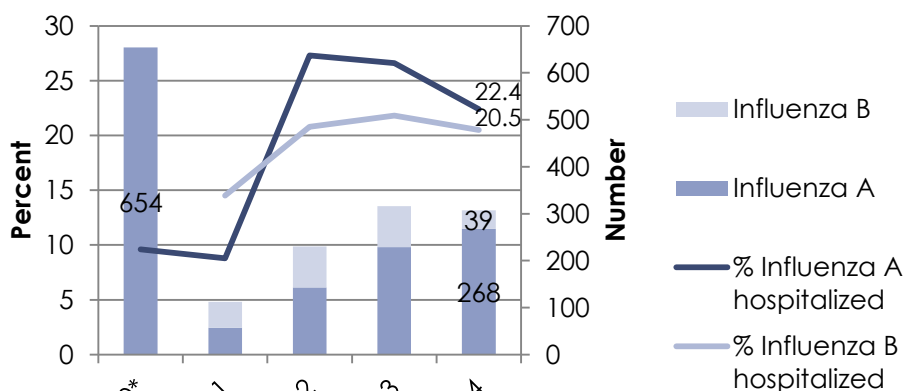
- In 2009/10, during the pandemic influenza season, rates more than doubled (Figure 1). In 2013/14 the rate was 91.3 per 100,000. Saskatchewan's rate was 50% higher than the Region's rate(not shown).³
- In 2013/14 there were 268 cases of influenza A and 39 cases of influenza B (Figure 2); all strains identified were covered by the 2013/14 vaccine offered.
- Twenty-two percent of the total population with laboratory confirmed influenza A were hospitalized and 20.5% of influenza B were hospitalized. This percentage has varied between 20-27% annually for the past four normal seasonal influenza seasons (Figure 2).
- The rate of influenza and the percentage hospitalization is higher in young children and senior adults ([Influenza Rates and Hospitalization by Age Group](#)).
- Of those hospitalized in 2014, 9% required intensive care involving intubation, ventilation or oxygen administered; these patients 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, 2009 to 2013



Source: PHAC, iPHIS

Figure 2: Influenza Cases and Percentage Hospitalized, Saskatoon Health Region, 2009/10 to 2013/14



Source: iPHIS

*Pandemic Influenza Year