Summary
Influenza in the population is estimated using the number of GP consultations for flu like illnesses. For 2006 this started on May 1. Current levels are low.

The health districts with the highest rate last week were Hutt and Tauranga. 50% of the cases this week were in adults aged between 20 and 64 years and 28% were in children aged 5-19 years.

So far this year 97% of the laboratory tested cases were influenza A with a small number of influenza B cases.

Thresholds used to describe influenza-like activity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term used</th>
<th>Consultation rate (per 100 000 population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>&lt;= 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal seasonal activity</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>100-149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>150-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher than expected</td>
<td>250-399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>severe epidemic</td>
<td>&gt;= 400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: This was published in New Zealand Public Health Report 2001, 8(1):9-12 "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999"

In the past week, a total of 276 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 84 general practices in 23 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 79.4 per 100 000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. Hutt had the highest consultation rate (262.8 per 100 000), followed by Tauranga (245.1 per 100 000).
Seventy-four swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Seventy-four swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, 18 influenza viruses were isolated, nine as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), eight as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2)-like, and one as B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

In addition, 24 influenza viruses were reported this week from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Twenty-three were identified as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed) and one as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2)-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 26, 30 June 2006. A total of 129 influenza viruses were identified, 63 as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) - like, 56 as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), five as A/California/7/2004-like, one as A/New Caledonia/20/19999 (H1N1)-like, two as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, one as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, and one as B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like.
Figure 2

*Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 30 June 2006*

- A (not subtyped)
- A/California/7/2004 (H3N2)-like
- A/New Caledonia/20/1999 (H1N1)-like
- A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2)-like
- B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like
- B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like
- B/Shanghai/361/2002-like

Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2004 and 2005 seasons, and 2006 so far.

Figure 3

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness in New Zealand, 2004, 2005 and 2006*

Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 26, 2006.
Figure 4

Influenza Surveillance NZ Week 26

Consultations for Influenza-like Illness (per 100 000 practice patients)

- No Data
- No Activity (0)
- Baseline (≤50)
- Normal (50-249)
- High Activity (250-399)
- Epidemic (≥400)

Code Health District
BE Eastern Bay of Plenty
CA Central Auckland
CB Canterbury
GS Gisborne
HB Hawkes Bay
HU Hutt
MW Manawatu
NL Northland
NM Nelson Marlborough
NW North West Auckland
OT Otago
RO Rotorua
RU Ruapehu
SA South Auckland
SC South Canterbury
SO Southland
TG Tauranga
TK Taranaki
TP Taupo
WC West Coast
WG Wanganui
WK Waikato
WN Wellington
WR Wairarapa

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