



NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

Influenza Health Profile

February 2014

Updated to include BRFSS data - June 2014

Background:

Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. It can cause mild to severe illness and result in hospitalization or even death. Certain populations, such as the elderly, young children, or those with certain health conditions, are at highest risk for experiencing severe flu complications. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention stress that the single best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated every year (CDC, 2013).

Statistics:

- 22.3% of Valley residents surveyed in 2009 said they did not get a flu shot because “they did not need it” (Valley Council, 2010).
- 39% of Valley residents surveyed in 2012 reported they did not receive a flu shot in the past year
- 35% of males and 43% of females ages 18 and older reported they did not receive a flu shot in the past year
- 33% of those adults making less than \$35,000 a year and 42% of those making more than \$75,000 a year reported not receiving a flu shot in the past year (CT DPH, 2012).
- During 2007, influenza incidence, indicating rate of reported illness in the Valley towns of Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour were HIGHER than the state (Yale-Griffin, 2012).
 - **Connecticut: 50 cases per 100,000 people**
 - Ansonia: 69 cases per 100,000 people
 - Derby: 111 cases per 100,000 people
 - Seymour: 56 cases per 100,000 people
- During 2008, influenza incidence rates in the Valley towns of Ansonia and Derby were HIGHER than the state (Yale-Griffin, 2012).
 - **Connecticut: 137 cases per 100,000 people**
 - Ansonia: 229 cases per 100,000 people
 - Derby: 295 cases per 100,000 people
- Annual deaths from influenza in the United States are currently estimated to be over 36,000 per year (DPH, 2009).
- Approximately 114,000 hospitalizations per year are related to influenza (DPH, 2009).

Flu Symptoms and Severity:

- Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can even lead to death. Typical symptoms may include (CDC, 2013):
 - Fever
 - Sore throat
 - Cough
 - Headaches
 - Runny/stuff nose
 - Muscle/body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Vomiting/diarrhea

- Influenza and pneumonia remained in the top ten leading causes of death in the Valley throughout 2007-2009, the most recent data available (Yale-Griffin, 2012)
- Most people who contract influenza will recover in a few days or less than two weeks, but some people may develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu—some of which can be life threatening and result in death.
- Pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections are examples of complications from the flu. The flu can make chronic problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu and people with chronic congestive heart failure may experience worsening of this condition triggered by the flu (DPH, 2009).

Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next!

Protect Yourself and Your Family:

1. **GET VACCINATED!** Vaccination is inexpensive and readily available at physician's offices, local pharmacies, local health departments and even retail stores such as Wal-Mart and Target. A variety of new vaccine presentations are available for children, the elderly, and those with egg allergies. Contact NVHD today at 203-881-3255 to learn more.
2. Take every day preventative actions to prevent the spread of germs.
 - Try to avoid contact with sick people.
 - If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.
 - While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.
 - Contact your healthcare provider immediately should you experience flu-like symptoms (CDC, 2013).

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013. "Seasonal Influenza (Flu)" <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>
2. Valley Council for Health and Human Services. 2010. "Valley Cares Community Survey." <http://nvhd.org/admin/resources/valleycares2009communitysurvey.pdf>
3. Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. 2012. "The Community Health Profile 2009 – 2010." <http://nvhd.org/admin/resources/1344889004chp20092010.pdf>
4. Connecticut Department of Public Health. 2009. "Influenza – Fact Sheet." <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3136&q=397418>
5. Connecticut Department of Public Health. 2012. "Behavioral Health Risks Among Naugatuck Valley Health District Adults in 2012."