

Snapshot of Victoria's 2017 influenza season – 21 July, 2017

Key points

- As at 16 July, influenza-like illness (ILI) activity in the community and notified cases were increasing, indicating the influenza season is underway in Victoria.
- The increase in cases to mark the start of the season has occurred earlier this year (late June) compared to last year (early August). As a result, the number of cases notified year-to-date is 117% higher than at the same time last year.
- Whilst the 2017 season has commenced earlier than last year, it is still too early to say whether it will be of the same or greater magnitude.

The following figure and table compare the main findings from the notifiable disease and GP sentinel surveillance systems for this year and last year.

Figure. Routinely notified influenza cases and VicSPIN influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation proportion in Victoria, 2016-2017.

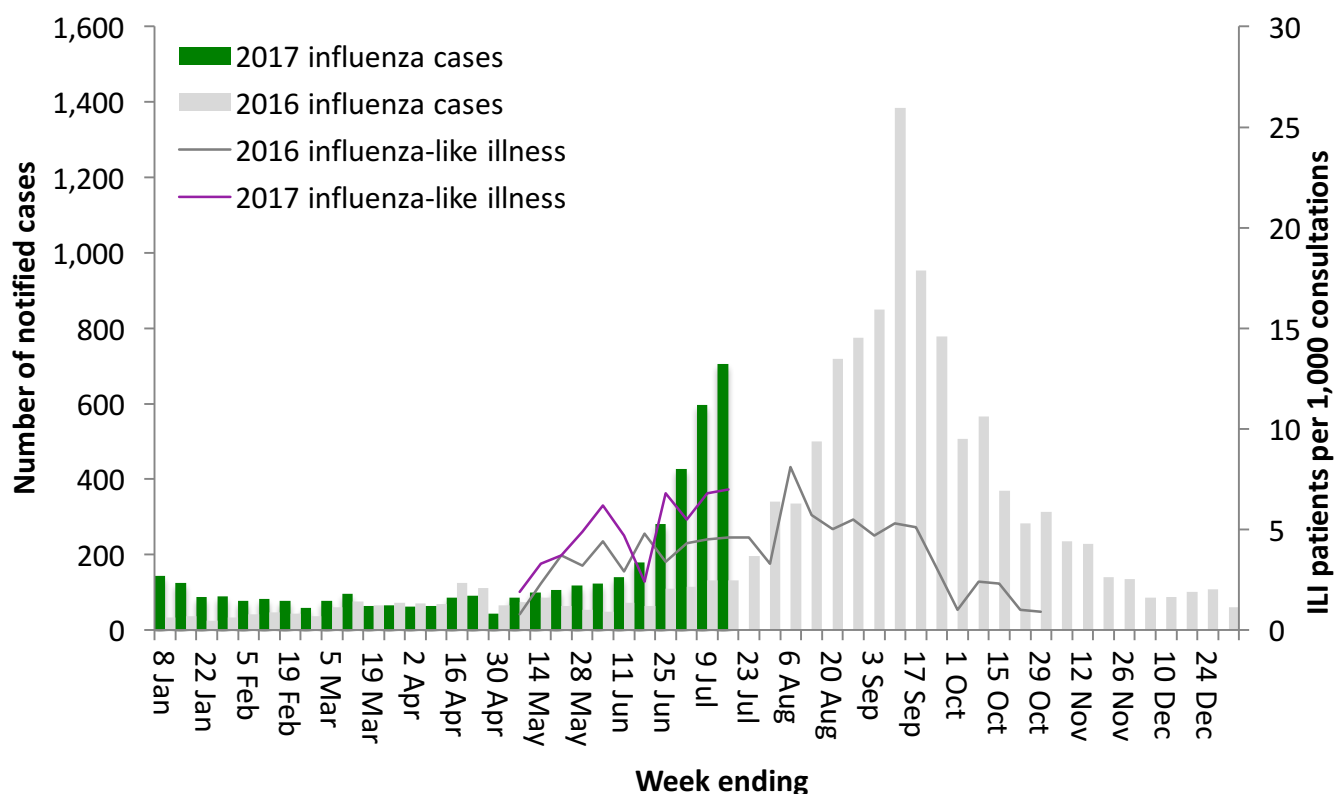


Table. Comparison of notified cases of influenza and influenza-like illness for week ending 16 July (week 28) in 2016 and 2017.

	2017	2016
Number of notified influenza cases for the week	705	132
Number of notified influenza cases for the year-to-date	4,251	1,958
ILI proportion for the week (per 1,000 patients)	7.0	4.6
Peak ILI proportion observed for the year (per 1,000 patients)	7.0 (week 28)	8.1 (week 31)

Victoria experiences an influenza season each year. Most cases are usually reported between June and September, but the commencement, duration and size of each season varies from year to year.

Epidemiologists and virologists at The Royal Melbourne Hospital's Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) at the Doherty Institute, in partnership with the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services, conduct surveillance to monitor influenza activity in Victoria.

This page describes the key features of the surveillance for influenza-like illness collected from two sources:

- *Notifiable disease surveillance* is conducted by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services. All cases of laboratory confirmed influenza diagnosed by doctors or laboratories in Victoria must be notified to the department. Numbers reported may vary from week-to-week as notifications data are updated.
- The *Victorian Sentinel Practice Influenza Network (VicSPIN)* is a network of about 80 Victorian GPs who submit weekly reports about the proportion of their patients with influenza-like illness (a clinical syndrome used as a proxy for influenza activity) and samples for testing.

Further information

More detailed analysis about the influenza season from VicSPIN, DHHS and other data sources is provided in the [Weekly influenza report](#). For media enquiries, please contact the Doherty Institute's Media and Communications Advisor, Liz Lopez, on (03) 8344 8378 or lopez.e@unimelb.edu.au or DHHS media on (03) 9096 8840.