

Snapshot of Victoria's 2018 influenza season – 3 August 2018

Key points

- As at 29 July, influenza-like illness (ILI) activity in the community and notified cases were increasing, suggesting the influenza season has commenced in Victoria.
- The increase in cases and ILI proportions to mark the start of the season has occurred later this year compared to last year (late June). As a result, the number of cases notified year-to-date is 59% lower than at the same time last year.

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, 2017-2018.

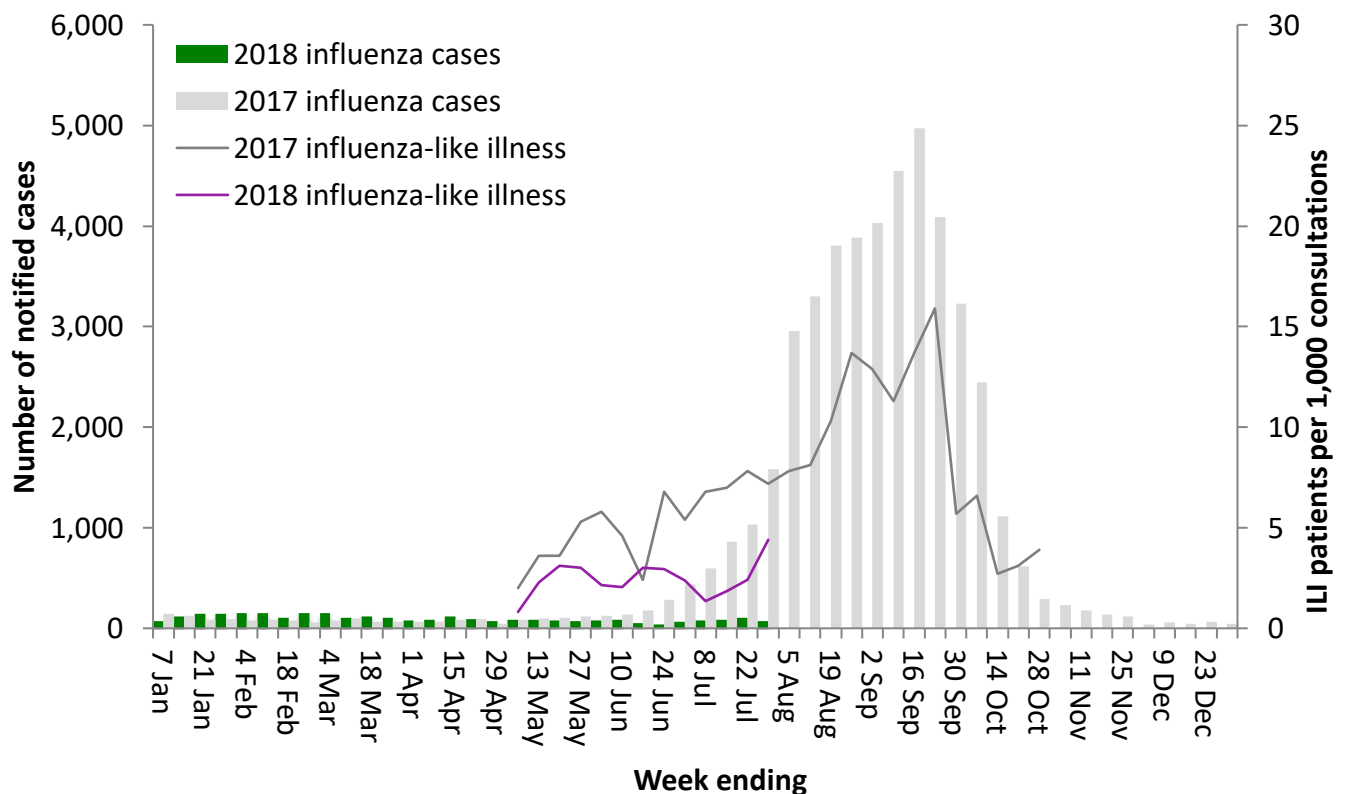


Table. Comparison of notified cases of influenza and influenza-like illness for week ending 29 July (week 30) in 2017 and 2018.

	2018	2017
Number of notified influenza cases for the week	68	1,582
Number of notified influenza cases for the year-to-date	2,918	7,037
ILI proportion for the week (per 1,000 patients)	4.4	7.2
Peak ILI proportion observed for the year (per 1,000 patients)	4.4 (week 30)	15.9 (week 38)

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 90 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, Rebecca Elliott, on (03) 8344 8378 or rebecca.elliott@unimelb.edu.au or DHHS media on (03) 9096 8840.