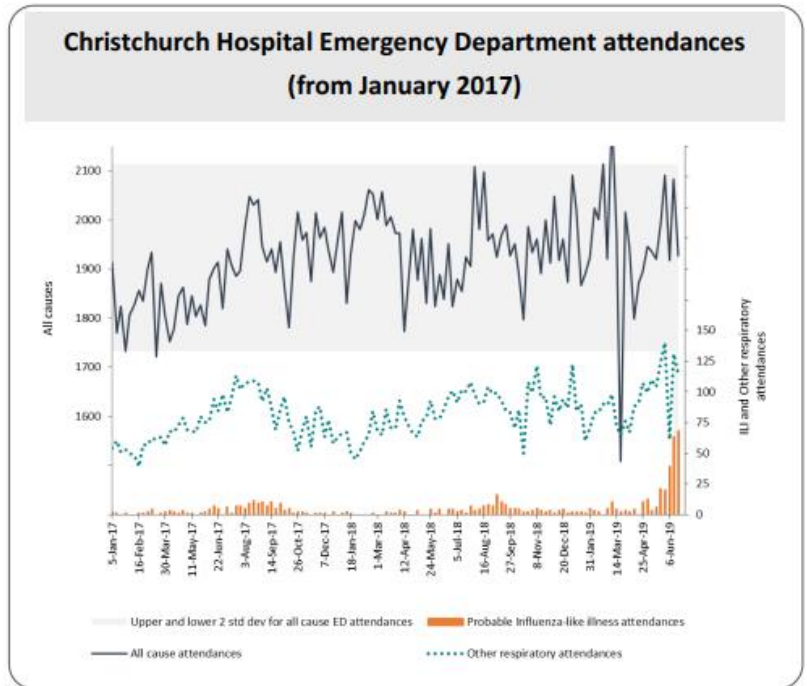


Thursday 27th June 2019 1300hrs

Important information for all GP teams, Community Pharmacists, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities – Please share this with everyone in your team

Current Influenza Situation

- The intelligence gleaned across the whole health sector shows that Canterbury continues to experience a very significant early wave of influenza. This is the earliest seasonal wave we have seen for over a decade in Canterbury. The majority of viral swabs are proving positive for influenza. The predominant strain remains influenza Type A H3N2.
- Three weeks ago the viral swabbing method across Canterbury changed to a more rapid process which detects influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) only. Prior to this change most swabs were positive for influenza and other respiratory viruses hardly featured. If you are seeing a patient currently with influenza like illness the odds are that they are experiencing true influenza and not another respiratory viral illness.
- Influenza cases are having a particularly significant effect on Emergency Department presentations, Hospital admissions and ICU occupancy.
- Most of our aged care facilities had or are currently experiencing significant influenza outbreaks.



Positive influenza identifications

Influenza type	This week	Last week
A(untyped)	140	142
B	39	32

Current Recommendations

- Although vaccination remains the most important strategy to avoid individuals becoming infected, poor vaccination supplies have dealt a blow to our efforts. Vaccinators have received communications from the Ministry of Health and Community and Public Health asking that we reserve any residual vaccine stock to only vaccinate our at risk funded patients (children with previous respiratory hospital admissions, all ages with chronic diseases, pregnant women or patients over 65 years of age with significant co-morbidities). As well we have been asked to reserve a number of vaccines for any pregnant women presenting right up to December.
- Attached to this update is a summary of viral characteristics commonly encountered during winter.
- You are encouraged to implement your winter capacity plans including:
 - Vaccination programme now only for vulnerable patients as mentioned above.
 - Using booking systems to allow for same day triaged appointments and/or extended hours.
 - Ensuring good signage, masks, alcohol hand-wash availability for all presenting with coughs and colds.

Kind regards,
 Dr Phil Schroeder
 Canterbury Primary Response Group