

Snapshot of Victoria's 2016 influenza season – 11 September, 2016

Key points

- As at 11 September, there was an *average* level of influenza-like illness (ILI) activity in the community, which is *lower* than at the same time in 2015.
- As at 11 September, the number of notified cases of influenza was *34% lower* than for the same week in 2015, whilst the number of year-to-date cases was *50% lower*.
- Victoria's 2016 influenza season commenced towards the end of July, compared to mid-June in 2015.
- Although cases of notified laboratory confirmed influenza are still increasing, data from other influenza and ILI surveillance systems indicate that the 2016 season probably peaked over the last several weeks. This is because different systems cover different populations.

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, 2015-2016.

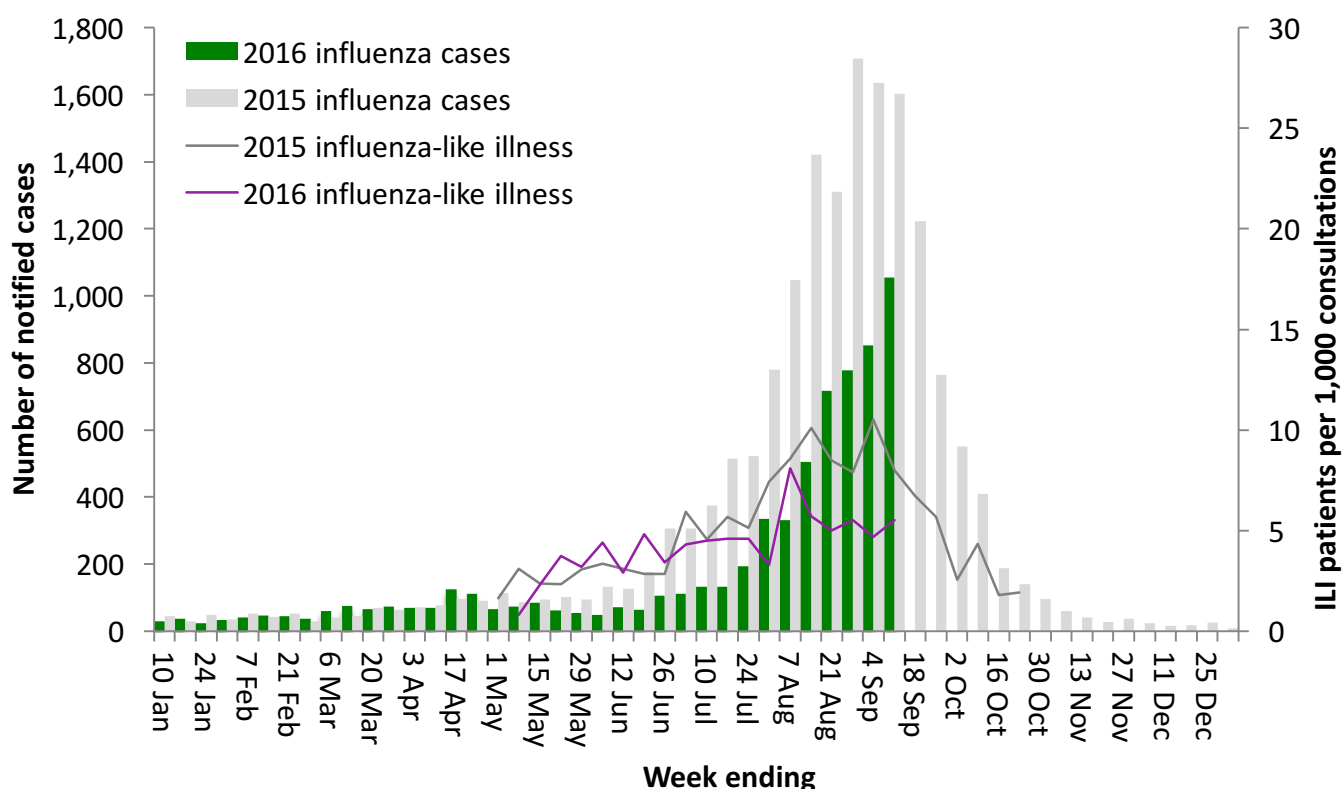


Table. Comparison of notified cases of influenza and influenza-like illness for week ending 11 September (week 36) in 2015 and 2016.

	2016	2015
Number of notified influenza cases for the week	1,055	1,603
Number of notified influenza cases for the year-to-date	6,710	13,341
ILI proportion for the week (per 1,000 patients)	5.5	8.0
Peak ILI proportion observed for the year (per 1,000 patients)	8.1 (week 31)	10.5 (week 35)

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.
- The *Victorian Sentinel Practice Influenza Network (VicSPIN)* is a network of about 100 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 <http://www.vidrl.org.au/surveillance/influenza-surveillance/>. For media enquiries, please contact the Doherty Institute's Communications Manager, Rebecca Elliott, on (03) 8344 8360 or rebecca.elliott@unimelb.edu.au or DHHS media on (03) 9096 8840.