

Flu Report 2019-2020

Meriden Department of Health and Human Services

ABOUT INFLUENZA

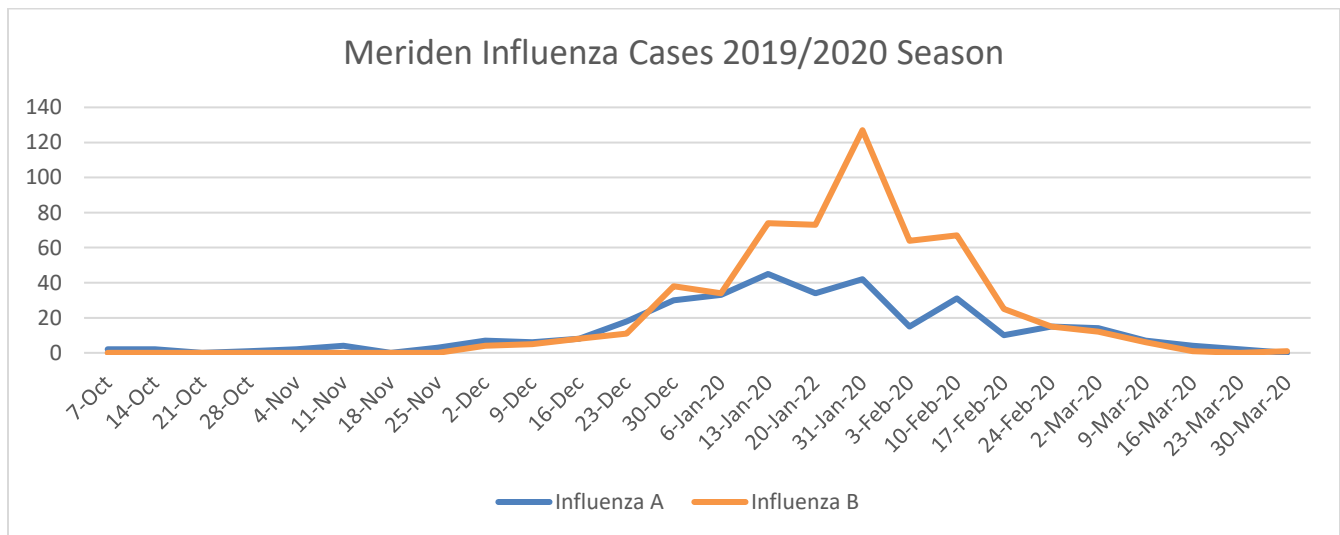
Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, women who are pregnant, and people with certain health conditions, such as asthma and heart disease, are at high risk of serious flu complications.

The United States 2019/2020 influenza season (generally October to March) was a high severity season with high levels of outpatient clinic and emergency department visits for influenza-like illness (ILI), high influenza-related hospitalization rates, and elevated and geographically widespread influenza activity across the country for an extended period. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Connecticut had “widespread” flu activity through the week ending March 22, 2020; the week ending March 29 the status was downgraded to “regional”, and then reduced to “sporadic” the week ending April 11.

The flu is a reportable disease; this means that local health departments receive a report when flu is diagnosed by a health provider, hospital or laboratory. This allows our Departments to conduct local surveillance and implement appropriate prevention, risk reduction, and response initiatives. We also monitor the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS) in case there are any reported flu cases that we did not receive a paper report for.

FLU IN MERIDEN

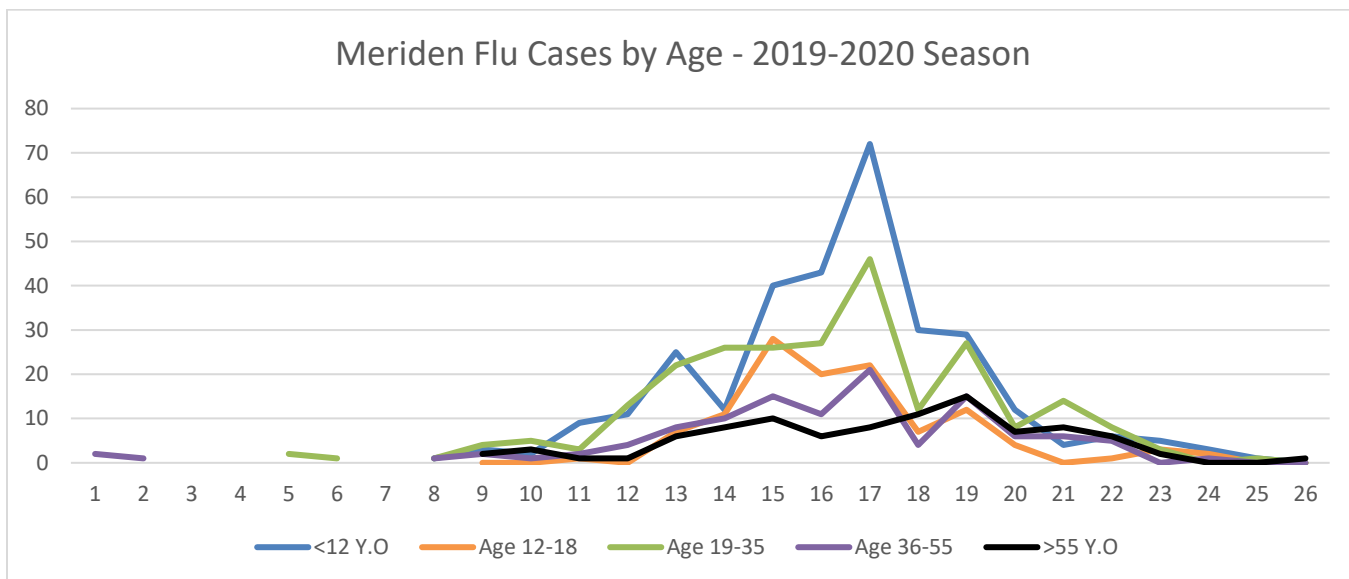
Our first confirmed case for the 2019/2020 season was received the week of October 7, 2019, about one week earlier than the 2018/19 season. The season in Meriden peaked the week of January 31, 2020; we received 169 positive lab reports that week (42 type A and 127 type B). Our last lab report was received the week of March 30, 2020.



Our total confirmed case count for this season was 900; this was an increase over the previous season (614 confirmed). There was a significant increase in cases this season due to urgent care centers seeing more clients than usual. We also saw cases much earlier this year (October 7, 2019) than last year, when we received our first positive report October 15, 2018. It is important to note that our office only receives lab confirmed cases of influenza; those who do not seek care and get tested for influenza are not included in this count.

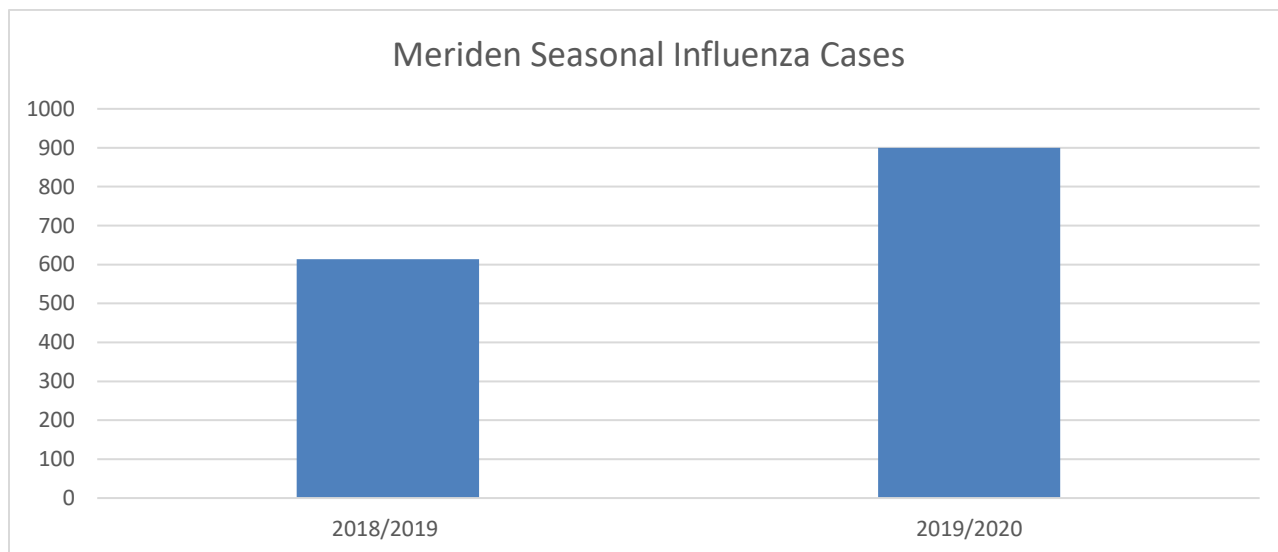
FLU DEMOGRAPHICS

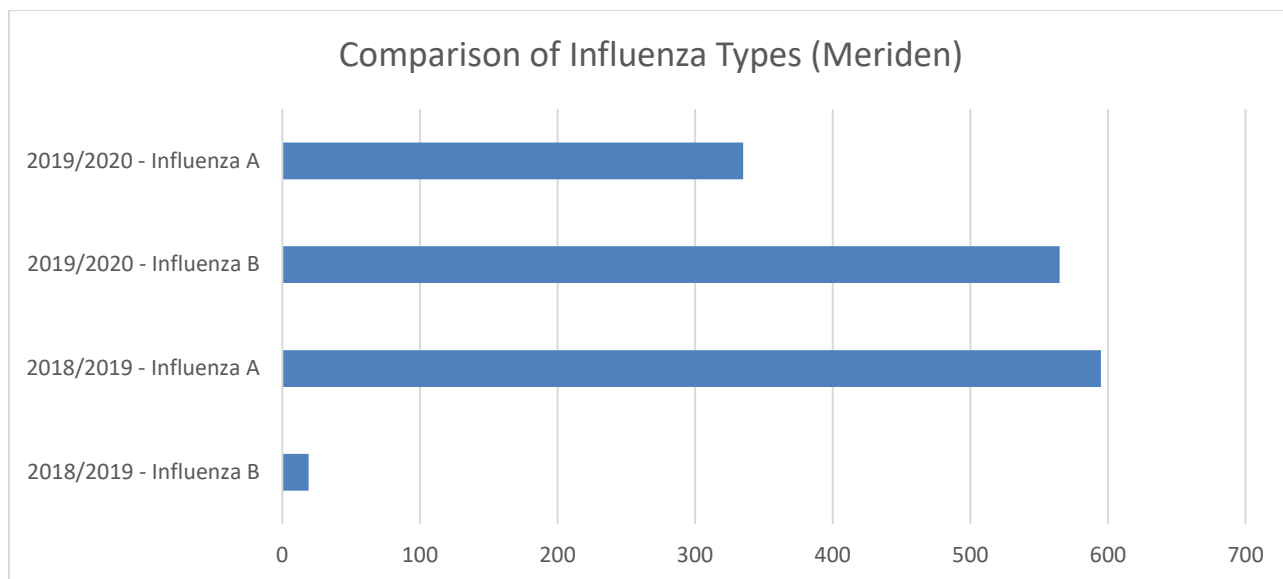
The majority of Meriden cases this year were seen in the under 12-age group (308 total) and the 19-35 year old age group (249).



SEASON COMPARISONS

Below is a chart comparing the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 seasonal influenza cases in Meriden.





FLU SHOT CLINICS

An annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your chances of getting the seasonal flu and spreading it to others. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive an annual flu vaccine.

This season we offered Fluzone HD (for those age 65 and older) quadrivalent, Fluzone quadrivalent (0.5mg for 36 months and older), Fluzone quadrivalent (0.25mg for those 6 to 35 months), Flublok (for those 19 and older), and FluLaval (0.5mg for those 6 months and older).

Our office conducted 22 flu shot clinics during the 2019/2020 season, in addition to offering the vaccine Monday through Friday at 165 Miller Street. Clinics were held at:

- Board of Education for employees
- City Hall for employees
- Meriden Water/Sewer for employees
- Meriden Police Department
- Meriden Public Library
- Meriden Senior Center
- Maloney and Platt High Schools
- Lincoln and Washington Middle Schools
- Elementary schools for staff

In addition, our public health nurses in the elementary schools provided clinic days for staff in their respective schools. We coordinated flu shot clinics with the Meriden Fire Department to ensure everyone received their vaccine. Fiderio, a local business in Meriden sent their staff to us for their flu shots.

In total, this past flu season we provided 754 adult and 451 child flu vaccines. Fortunately, our office did not experience a shortage of flu shots and were able to provide the vaccine through May.



LONG TERM CARE CONSULTATION

Between September of 2019 and March 2020 our office worked on 3 long term care (LTC) facility respiratory outbreaks. Long-term care facilities may be defined as institutions such as nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities that provide health care to people (including children) who are unable to manage independently in the community. Respiratory outbreaks are defined as 2 or more ill residents, suspected or confirmed.

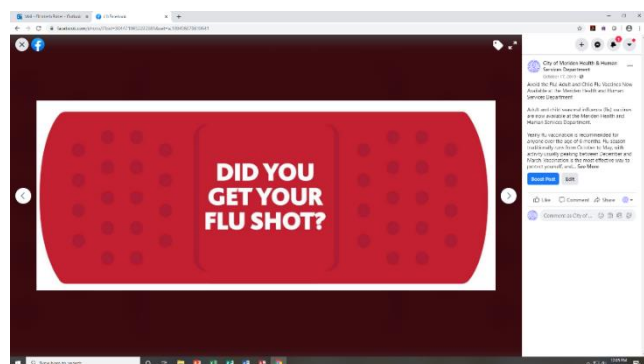
We provided consultation on isolation, restriction, and cleaning procedures to reduce the spread of illness. Our office communicates with the facility's Infectious Disease Nurse until the outbreak is over.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Our office conducts extensive outreach and education during flu season.

We posted regular flu updates, including the weekly CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) flu reports and prevention tips on our Facebook page, with some posts having over 1,500 views. We also posted information on our website, sent articles to be published in local newsletters, made regular prevention announcements at the Senior Center and sent informational letters to parents, day care centers, and local providers. We continued to collaborate with the Board of Education and School Readiness programs to increase access to the vaccine.

We also distributed flu prevention kits, with hand-sanitizer, tissues, and a card with flu prevention tips in English and Spanish. We listed all of our vaccine offerings, including seasonal flu vaccine, on www.vaccinefinder.org which is highly publicized by the CT DPH. This website is still live and lists our currently provided vaccines.



Submitted by Elizabeth Raber, Public Health Educator

May 26, 2020

