

# Flu Report 2018-19

## Meriden Department of Health and Human Services

### ABOUT INFLUENZA

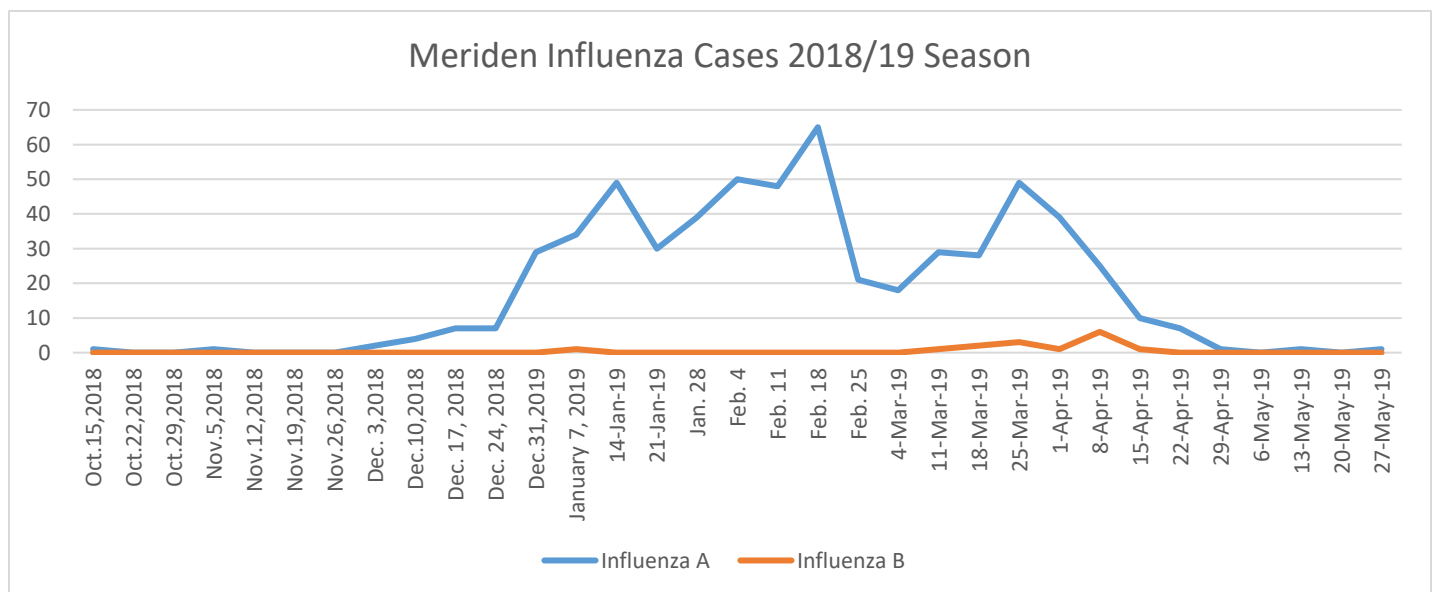
Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, women who are pregnant, and people with certain health conditions,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

The United States 2018/19 influenza season (October 1, 2018–May 19, 2019) 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 April 27, 2019; the week ending May 4 the status was downgraded to “regional”, and then reduced to “local” the week ending May 18.

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

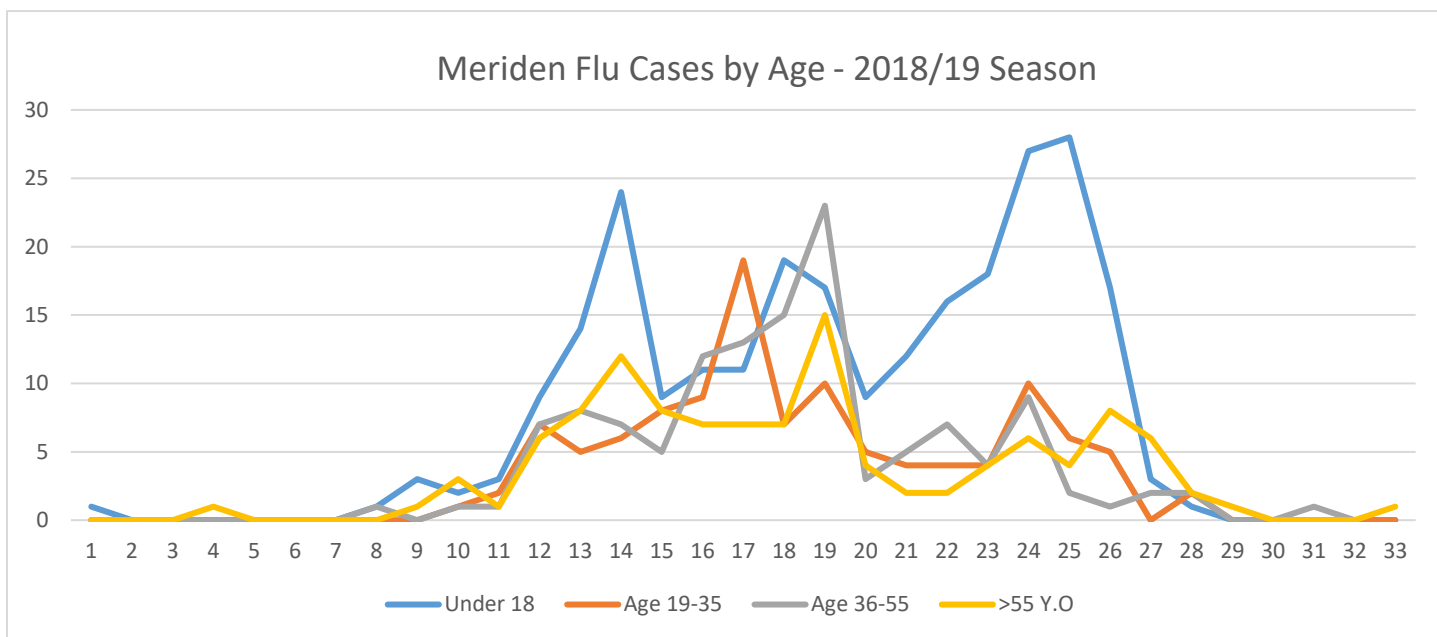
Our first confirmed case for the 2018/19 season was received the week of October 15, 2018, about a month earlier than the 2017/18 season. The season in Meriden peaked the week of February 18, 2019; we received 65 positive lab reports that week (all Influenza A). Our last lab report was received the week of May 27, 2019.



Our total confirmed case count for this season was 614; this was an increase over the previous season (351 confirmed). We also saw cases much earlier this year (October 15, 2018) than last year, when we received our first positive report November 6, 2017. 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.

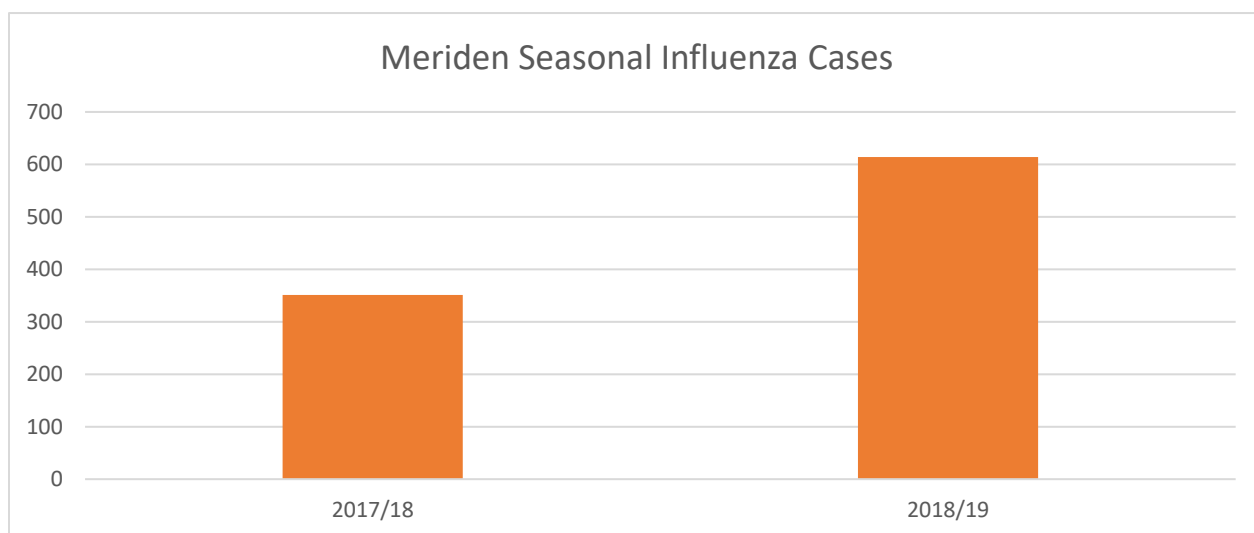
**FLU DEMOGRAPHICS**

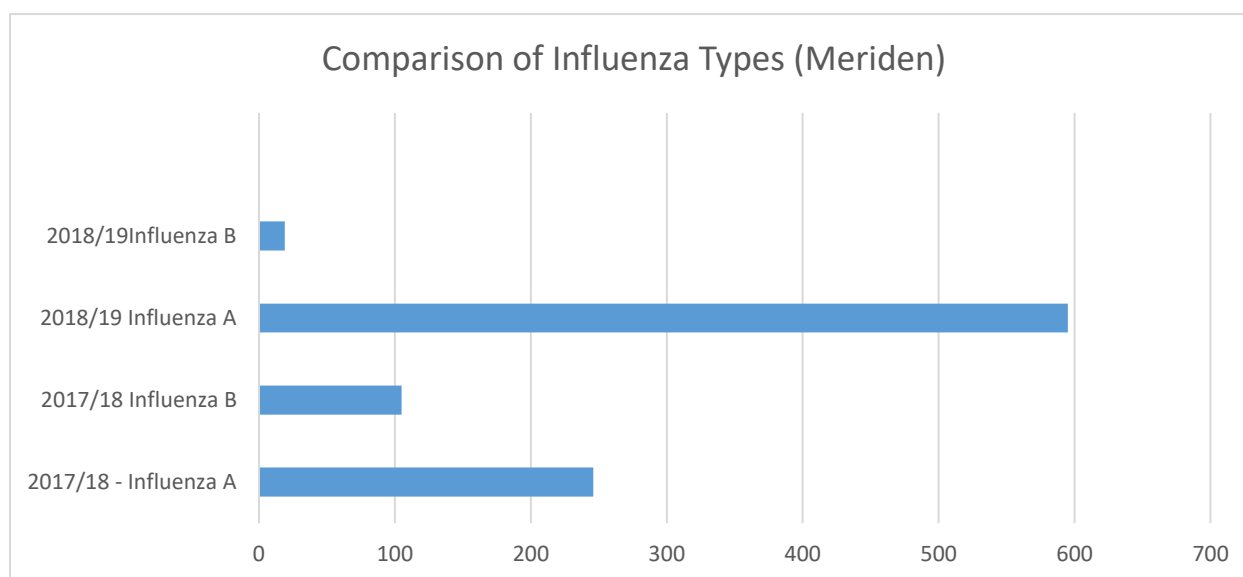
The majority of Meriden cases this year were seen in the under 18 age group (255 total) and the 36 – 55 year old age group (129).



**SEASON COMPARISONS**

Below is a chart comparing the 2017/18 and 2018/19 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 2018/19 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.

Many local businesses and non-profit organizations sent their staff to us for their flu shots, including Pyramid Time Systems, Fiderio and Sons, Kuhn Employment Opportunities, Meriden Soup Kitchen and Shelter NOW.

In total, this past flu season we provided 787 adult and 525 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 November 2018 and April 2019 our office worked on 8 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 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. A “Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown” themed flu-shot clinic was held on October 29, 2018.

We also distributed 500 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](http://www.vaccinefinder.org) which is highly publicized by the CT DPH. This website is still live and lists our currently provided vaccines.



## Great Pumpkin Flu Shot Clinic!

**Monday,  
October 29, 2018  
3:00pm—6:00pm**  
 Meriden Health & Human  
 Services Department  
 165 Miller Street

Come in costume, stay for the movie, coloring and crafts. Goodie bags for the first 50 children who come and get their flu shot.

**Make it a family event!**  
Flu shots are **FREE** for Meriden children, and **FREE** to the first 50 adults who come with their children to this event (\$20 value!).

Please call our public health nurses at 203-630-4234 with any questions. No appointment is necessary, but please be aware there may be a wait as our little pumpkins are getting their shot!

Submitted by Lea Crown, Director of Health and Human Services

June 7, 2019

