

CDC: 1 in 5 kids had flu-like illness this month

October 22 2009, By MIKE STOBBE , AP Medical Writer



Marisol Rangeo receives the swine flu nasal spray vaccine in Indianapolis, Thursday, Oct. 22, 2009. The Marion County Health Department had about 3,000 shots and nasal sprays on hand Thursday for the free clinic. (AP Photo/Darron Cummings)

(AP) -- About 1 in 5 U.S. children had a flu-like illness earlier this month - and most of those cases likely were swine flu, according to a new government health survey. About 7 percent of surveyed adults said they'd had a flu-like illness, the survey found.

The information comes from a household survey of more than 14,000 adults done in the first 11 days of October. The adults were asked if they had a fever or other flu-like symptoms in the past week; a smaller number were asked about their children.

The survey was done by telephone and there was no medical confirmation of their reports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the results Wednesday at a medical meeting in Atlanta.

Swine flu is widespread throughout the country, and the virus is causing more illness now that it has at any time since it was first identified in April. In people ages 5 to 64, there have been as many flu-related hospitalizations in the last six weeks as there usually are in an entire flu season, said Lyn Finelli, a CDC flu surveillance official.

Also, the number of swine flu deaths in children since the start of September roughly equals the number in the first four months of the pandemic, Finelli said.

For most people, swine flu has been a mild illness, perhaps very mild, CDC officials believe. There are cases without symptoms, "and maybe quite a few of those," said Nancy Cox, a CDC flu expert.

Millions of Americans have been infected, CDC officials estimate.

On the Net:

CDC swine flu update: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>

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