

England reports new swine flu deaths

December 11 2010

Eight people have died from swine flu in England since early September, health authorities told AFP on Saturday, with Britain seemingly at the forefront of a winter resurgence in Europe.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) insisted it was to be expected that the H1N1 strain of flu that caused the 2009 pandemic would be the most common strain this winter.

A spokeswoman told AFP that since early September, "10 deaths associated with confirmed influenza infection in England have been reported, eight with [influenza A H1N1](#)."

Professor John Watson, head of [respiratory diseases](#) department at the HPA, told The Independent newspaper: "We seem to be in the vanguard on this. Other European countries are just beginning to see some H1N1 activity."

Britain was among the first countries hit by swine flu after it emerged in Mexico early last year, and at one point recorded more than 100,000 new cases a week as the virus was officially declared a pandemic.

Watson said in a statement: "Over the last few weeks we have seen a rise in the number of cases of seasonal flu, including both H1N1 (2009) and flu B.

"We have also received reports of patients with serious illness requiring hospitalisation and outbreaks of flu in schools across the country."

He warned that it was dangerous for the elderly, [pregnant women](#) and people with heart, lung, liver or kidney problems, and urged people to get vaccinated if they were in an at-risk group.

In Britain, spread of swine flu slowed over summer 2009 then briefly accelerated again in cooler autumn weather and as children returned to school in September, but then dropped off into the winter months, and as vaccines started being used.

There were 494 deaths in the year to April 2010, The Independent said.

The World Health Organisation declared the [swine flu](#) pandemic over in August, more than a year after the new virus spread around the world, sparking panic and killing thousands before fizzling out.

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Citation: England reports new swine flu deaths (2010, December 11) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-12-england-swine-flu-deaths.html>

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