



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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Chicago Department of Public Health

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What is the risk?

As of January 8, 2010, the risk of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) influenza infection in Chicago continues to be low. The numbers of severe influenza infections, influenza-like illnesses, and positive influenza tests have all decreased. Due to the possibility of a recurrence of heightened activity in the coming months, all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to protect themselves from infection by getting vaccinated with the pandemic influenza vaccine. Chicagoans should ask their healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccine availability. For those without a healthcare provider or whose healthcare providers do not have the pandemic vaccine, a schedule of [City of Chicago pandemic vaccine clinics](#)¹ is available on the City website and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Three confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1)-associated hospitalizations in Chicago residents have been reported for surveillance week 52 (December 27, 2009 – January 2, 2010). This is a 98% decrease from the highest reported weekly count of the fall, reported in early November, and represents the eighth consecutive week that a decline has been noted (figure 1).

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

With 19 Chicago hospitals reporting, 8.3% of emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (i.e. fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). Although slightly higher than the rates reported in previous surveillance weeks, 10 of the 19 hospitals reported lower activity from the previous week. Among seven outpatient clinics reporting for the week of December 27, 2009 – January 2, 2010, 3.6% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness. This level of activity is similar to levels seen during the same surveillance week during previous influenza seasons (figure 2).

Which influenza strains are circulating?

For the week of December 27, 2009 – January 2, 2010, with five laboratories reporting, all 14 influenza-positive specimens for which subtyping was performed were reported as presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1); no influenza B or seasonal influenza A strains were reported.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](#)² report provides national updates and trends related to the intensity of influenza activity across the United States, as well as detailed information on antiviral resistance, severity of illness, and other topics. Updates specific to [Illinois](#)³ and [Suburban Cook County](#)⁴ are also available online.

Figure 1. Reported number of hospitalizations associated with confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1), Chicago, by week of specimen collection, April 2009 - January 2, 2010

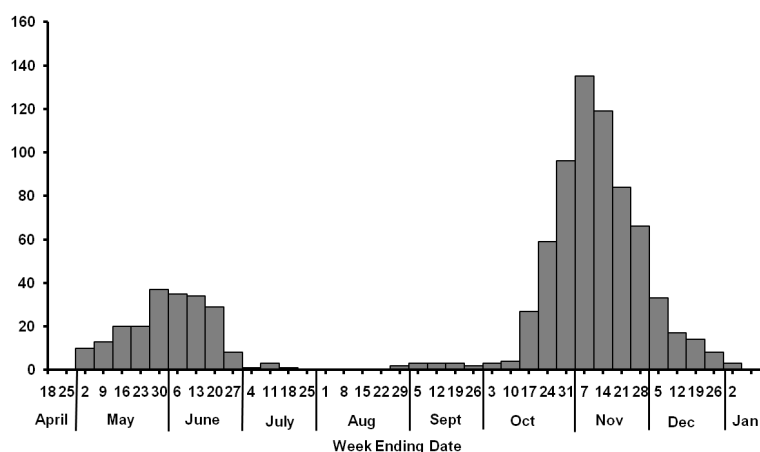
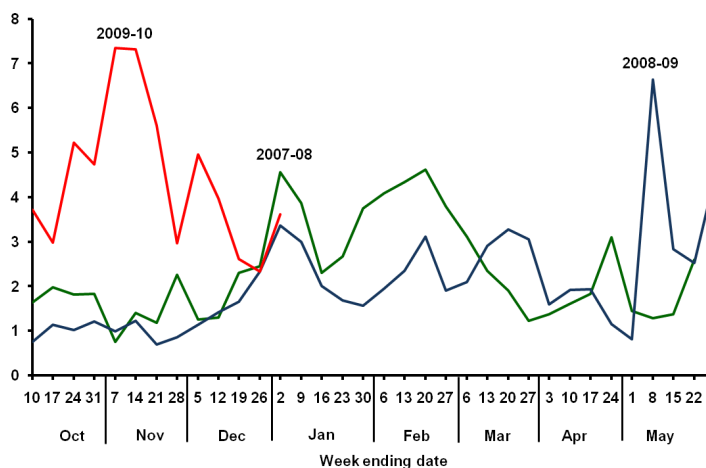


Figure 2. Percent of patient visits to enrolled doctor's offices attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2009-10) and previous two seasons, October-May



¹http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/JanuaryScheduleH1N1_english.pdf

²<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; ³<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate08-09.htm>; ⁴http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation