



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Chicago Department of Public Health

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago is decreasing. Locally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza A is at its lowest level since January. Influenza B accounts for over one-third of all positive influenza specimens tested during week 11 and for 15% of all influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) hospitalizations. The H3N2 and H1N1 influenza A subtypes continue to circulate as well. Vaccine is available in doctor's offices, retail pharmacies, CDPH Neighborhood Health Centers, and immunization walk-in clinics. A list of CDPH clinics is available on the [City of Chicago website](http://www.cityofchicago.org)¹ and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Since October, a total of 93 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.² Of these, 3 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 11 (March 13-19, 2011). No influenza-associated deaths were reported for week 11. Fourteen deaths have been reported so far this season. Two of these occurred in pediatric patients, and 11 (79%) were in adults aged ≥ 50 years.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of March 13-19, 2011, with 18 hospitals reporting, 6.3% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This proportion is nearly three percentage points below the peak reported activity reported in late January (Figure 1). With 4 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 3.1% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 7 laboratories reporting, 41 (10.2%) of 403 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 11. Among 27 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 11 were subtyped as H3N2, 7 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 9 were not subtyped. Fourteen specimens tested positive for influenza B (Figure 2).

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)³ 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](http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate10-11.htm)⁴ and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)⁵ are also available online.

Figure 1. Weekly reported percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2010-2011) and previous season, October-May.

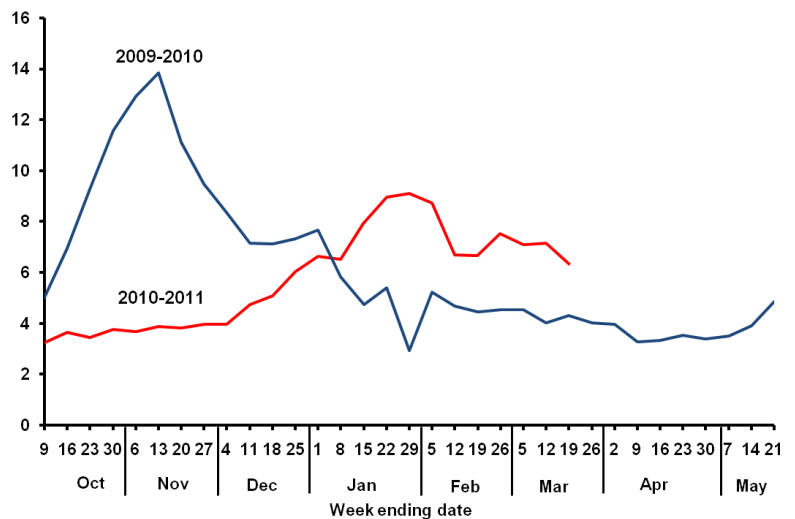
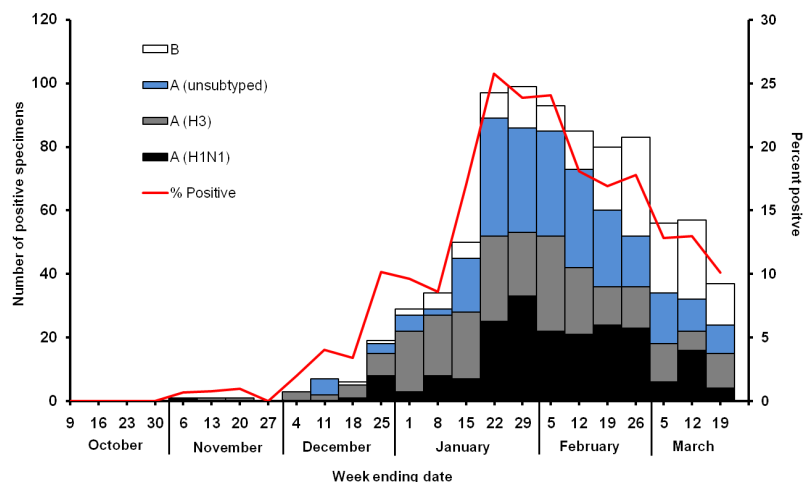


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-March 19, 2011.



¹http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find_a_clinic.html

²https://www.chicagohan.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=28960&folderId=24344&name=DLFE-144.pdf

³<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; ⁴<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate10-11.htm>

⁵http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation