



# 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 continues to decline. Locally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza A has decreased for the second consecutive week and remains at its lowest level since January. For the first time this season, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza B is higher than those testing positive for influenza A; the H3N2 and H1N1 influenza A subtypes continue to circulate, but in the past week influenza B accounted for 55% of all positive specimens. The influenza vaccine protects against both influenza A and B. 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/city/en/depts/cdpn/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find_a_clinic.html)<sup>1</sup> and by calling 311.

## Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Since October, a total of 94 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.<sup>2</sup> Of these, 1 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 12 (March 20-26, 2011). No influenza-associated deaths were reported for week 12. Fourteen deaths have been reported so far this season. Two of these occurred in pediatric patients, and 11 (79%) were in adults aged  $\geq 50$  years. The racial/ethnic distribution to date is 37% Black, 28% White, 21% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 9% not reported or other.

## How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of March 20-26, 2011, with 17 hospitals reporting, 6% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is the second consecutive week that a decrease has been noted (Figure 1). With 4 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 3.2% of visits were due to ILI.

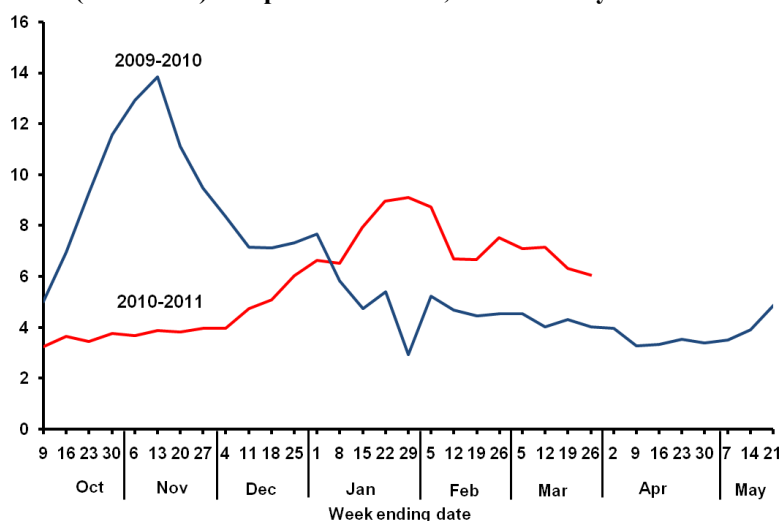
## Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 7 laboratories reporting, 29 (7.5%) of 389 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 12. Among 13 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 5 were subtyped as H3N2, 6 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 2 were not subtyped. Sixteen specimens tested positive for influenza B (Figure 2).

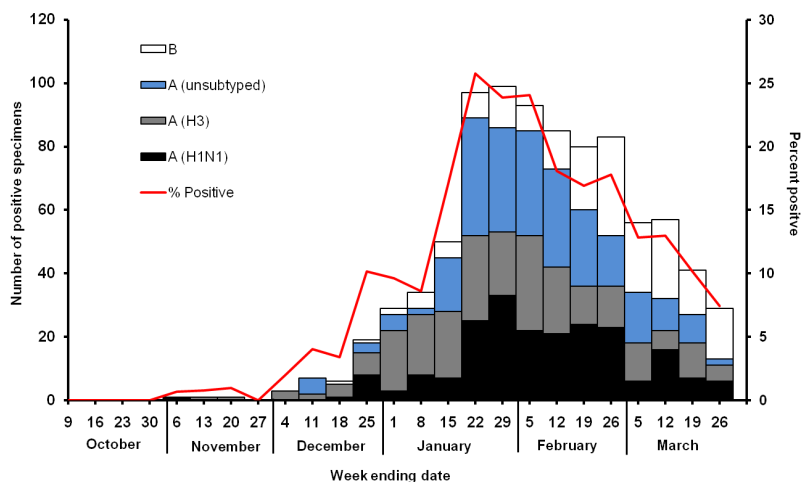
## Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)<sup>3</sup> 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)<sup>4</sup> and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)<sup>5</sup> 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 26, 2011.**



<sup>1</sup>[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdpn/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find\\_a\\_clinic.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdpn/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find_a_clinic.html)

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.chicagohan.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?p\\_l\\_id=28960&folderId=24344&name=DLFE-144.pdf](https://www.chicagohan.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=28960&folderId=24344&name=DLFE-144.pdf)

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

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu\\_current\\_situation](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)