



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Chicago Department of Public Health

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

April 15, 2011

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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 has decreased for the fourth consecutive week, falling by over twenty percentage points from its peak in January. The proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza B remains higher than those testing positive for influenza A, accounting for 56% of all influenza-positive specimens. The H3N2 and H1N1 influenza A subtypes are co-circulating in equal proportions. 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)¹ and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Two influenza-associated ICU admissions were reported for surveillance week 14 (April 3-9, 2011). This represents an 87% decrease in the number of reported ICU admissions from the peak seen in February. Since October, a total of 97 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.² Of these, 25% were children under 18 years of age and 49% were 50 years of age or older. The racial/ethnic distribution to date is 37% Black, 29% White, 21% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 8% not reported or other. No deaths were reported for surveillance week 14. A total of fifteen deaths have been reported so far this season including two in pediatric patients.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of April 3-9, 2011, with 18 hospitals reporting, 5.2% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is the lowest level recorded since December, 2010 (Figure 1). With 3 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 1.5% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 7 laboratories reporting, 16 (4.7%) of 340 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 14. Among 7 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 2 were subtyped as H3N2, 2 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 3 were not subtyped. Nine specimens tested positive for influenza B (Figure 2).

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Flu-View](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.

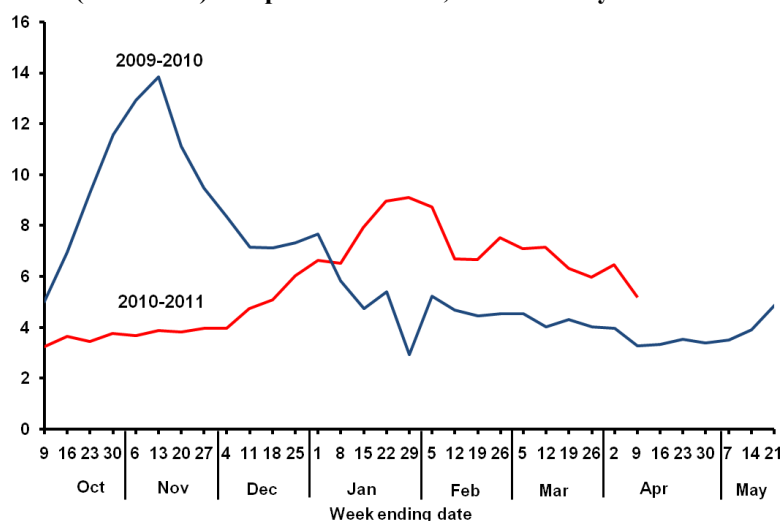
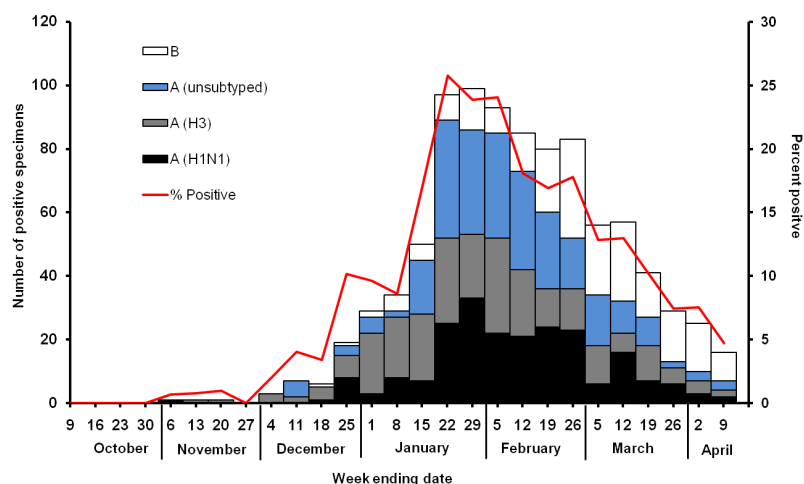


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-April 9, 2011.



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