



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 is at its lowest level seen since early December, decreasing by nearly thirty-three percentage points from its peak in January. This is the fourth consecutive week that the proportion of influenza B specimens is higher than the proportion of influenza A, accounting for 83% of all specimens tested. Influenza A strains (H3N2 and H1N1) do not appear to be circulating widely. 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?

No influenza-associated ICU admissions were reported for surveillance week 15 (April 10-16, 2011). Since October, a total of 97 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH (Figure 1).² Of these, 25% were children under 18 years of age and 49% were 50 years of age or older. Thirty-one percent of ICU cases required intubation and the three underlying medical conditions most frequently cited were lung diseases including asthma (42%), heart diseases (22%), and diabetes (19%). One ICU case was pregnant. No deaths were reported for surveillance week 15. A total of fifteen deaths have been reported so far this season (both ICU and non-ICU) including two in pediatric patients.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of April 10-16, 2011, with 14 hospitals reporting, 2.3% 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 for the entire influenza season and below levels reported during the same surveillance week in 2010. With 3 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 3.2% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 6 laboratories reporting, 6 (2.9%) of 209 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 15. One specimen tested positive for influenza A, subtyped as 2009 H1N1. Five 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. Reported number of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations among Chicago residents, October 9, 2010-April 16, 2011.

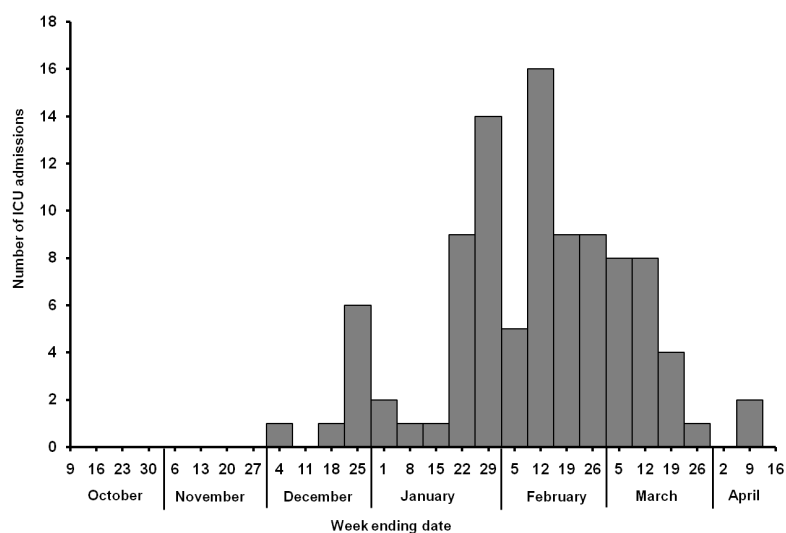
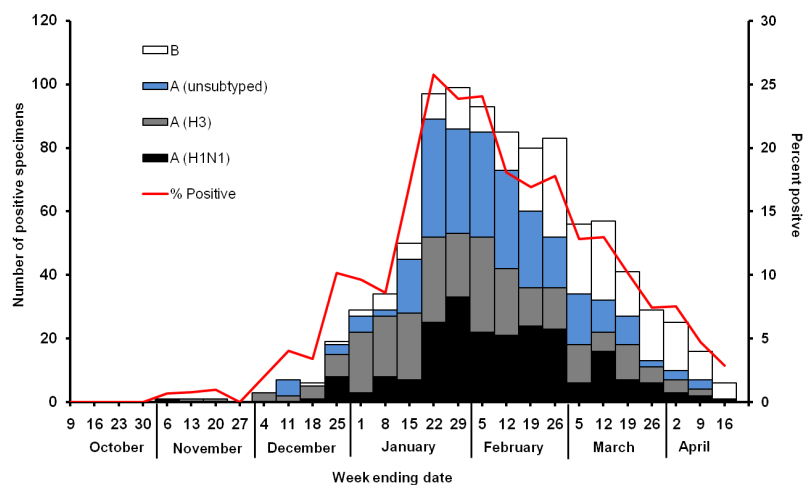


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-April 16, 2011.



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