



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Chicago Department of Public Health

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

May 6, 2011

Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

The 16th Annual CDPH Infection Control Conference will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2011 at Malcolm X College. Registration information will be available soon.

What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago is low. Locally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza has decreased by twenty-three percentage points from its peak in January and remains among the lowest levels observed all season. Among the small number of specimens testing positive for influenza during the past surveillance week, influenza B was detected in higher proportion at 75% of the total 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)¹ and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

No influenza-associated ICU admissions was reported for surveillance week 17 (April 24-30, 2011). Since October, a total of 98 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 remains at 37% Black, 30% White, 20% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 8% not reported or other. No deaths were reported for surveillance week 17. 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 24-30, 2011, with 17 hospitals reporting, 4.2% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is approaching levels seen during the same surveillance week in 2010 and has decreased by over half since its peak in January (Figure 1). With 4 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, <1% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 6 laboratories reporting, 4 (2.3%) of 173 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 17. One specimen tested positive for influenza A, subtyped as H3N2. Three 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.

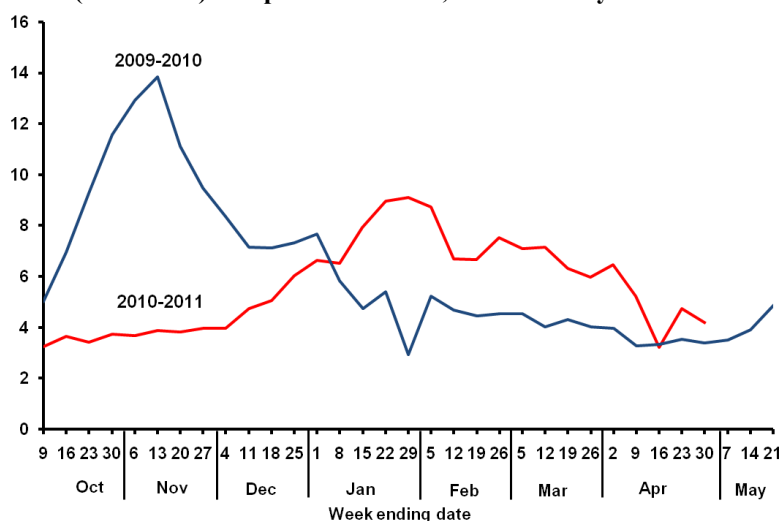
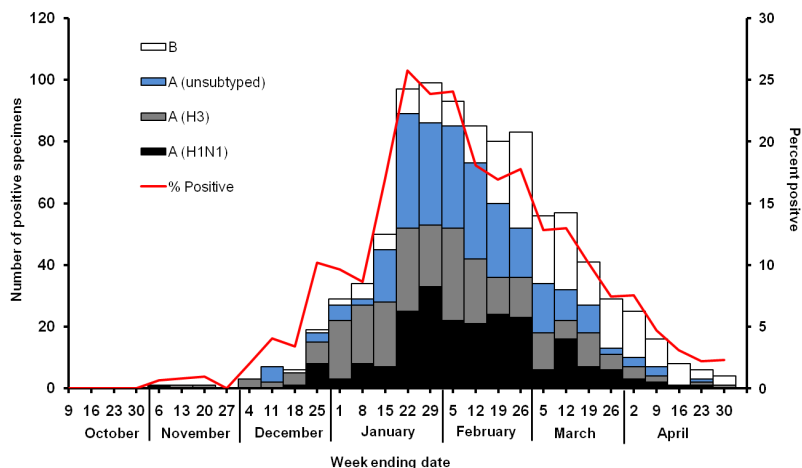


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-April 30, 2011.



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