



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

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Chicago Department of Public Health
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What is the risk?

This is the first *Chicago Flu Update* for the 2011-2012 influenza season. Currently, the risk of influenza infection is low. Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. Chicagoans should ask their healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccine availability. For those without a healthcare provider or whose healthcare providers do not have the influenza vaccine, a schedule of [City of Chicago influenza vaccine clinics](#)¹ is available on the City website and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued interim influenza testing and reporting recommendations. Suspected novel influenza, pediatric influenza-associated deaths, influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations and outbreaks of influenza-like illness in a congregate setting should all be reported to CDPH via [INEDSS](#)². Since October 2, 2011, CDPH has not received any reports of these types of influenza cases.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

All hospitals in Chicago that provide emergent care are required to report on a weekly basis the total number of emergency room visits, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI) (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). For the week of October 9-15, 2011, with 15 hospitals reporting, 4.3% of emergency room visits were due to ILI. Figure 1 shows Chicago emergency department ILI activity for the current season and for the previous season. Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago also report on the number of ILI patients seen weekly. From October 9-15, 2011, with 16 outpatient clinics reporting, 1.3% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 2)

Which influenza strains are circulating?

Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza subtyping. For the week of October 9-15, 2011, with 4 laboratories reporting, 1 (<1%) of 105 specimens tested was positive for influenza, typed as influenza A (not subtyped).

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](#)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](#)⁴ and [Suburban Cook County](#)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 (2011-2012) and previous season, October-May.

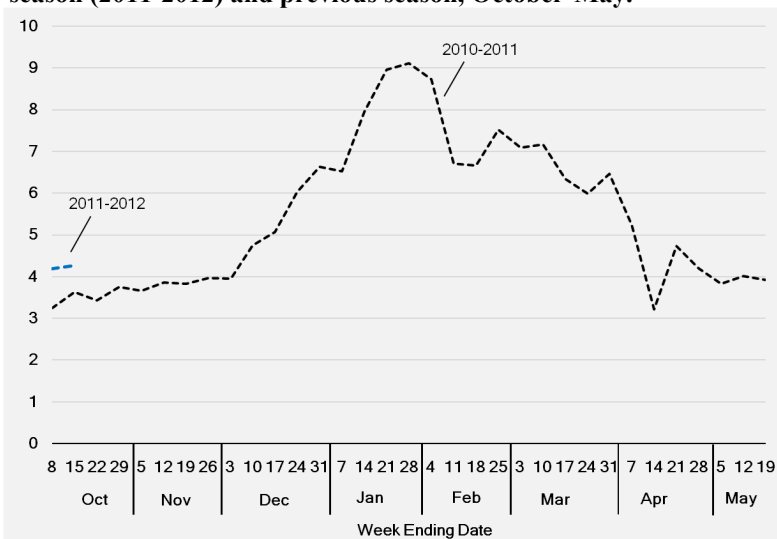
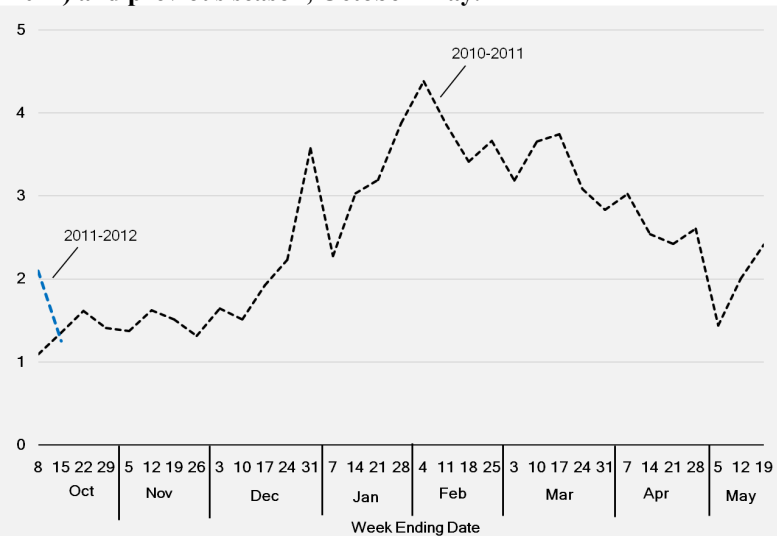


Figure 2. Weekly reported percent of doctor's office visits attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2011-2012) and previous season, October-May.



¹http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/influenza/cdph_flu_shot_sitesacrosschicago.html; ²<https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/>;

³<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>; ⁴<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/surveillance.htm>; ⁵<http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/#Influenza>