



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?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection in the Chicago area is low. Recently, CDC has confirmed two additional cases of human infection with novel swine-origin influenza A viruses in different states. One of these viruses is the same strain that was identified in ten patients earlier this year. The other virus was previously detected in 2007. There were no reports of direct or close contact with swine prior to illness onset in either of these cases and both patients have fully recovered. These novel viruses are susceptible to the antiviral medications oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®). Vaccination is the best way to protect against human seasonal 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. Uninsured individuals and those with insurance that does not cover flu shots can [obtain a voucher for a free flu shot at Walgreens](#)¹. The Chicago Department of Public Health has influenza vaccine clinics scheduled through December 10, 2011. A schedule of [City of Chicago influenza vaccine clinics](#)² is available on the City website and by calling 311. After December 10, influenza vaccine will be available at [CDPH immunization clinics](#)³.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

No influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported for week 48 (November 27-December 3, 2011). Suspected novel influenza, pediatric influenza-associated deaths, and influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations should all be reported to CDPH via [INEDSS](#)⁴. Outbreaks of influenza-like illness in a congregate setting are also reportable; in Chicago these reports can be made by phone to (312) 746-5911. To date, no cases meeting the reporting criteria have been reported to CDPH.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of November 27-December 3, 2011, with 15 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 similar to levels reported during the same surveillance week in 2010 (Figure 1). Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in the Influenza-like Illness Network (ILINet) by reporting the percentage of clinic visits due to ILI. From November 27-December 3, 2011, with 17 outpatient clinics reporting, 2.4% of outpatient clinic visits were due to ILI. This is the highest level reported so far this season (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 November 27-December 3, 2011, with 4 laboratories reporting, 1 of the 128 specimens tested for influenza was positive, subtyped as influenza A (H3N2). Since October 2011, less than one percent of the total 1,138 specimens tested for influenza have been positive.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](#)⁵ 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](#)⁶ and [Suburban Cook County](#)⁷ 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 two seasons, October-May.

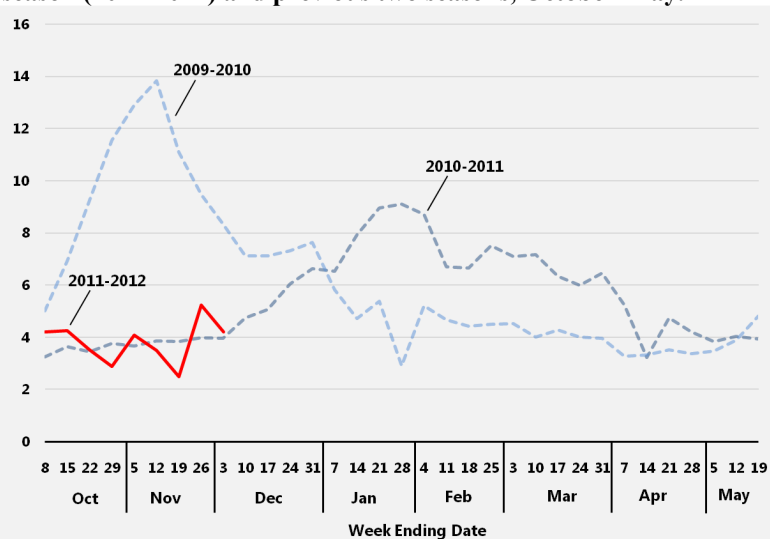
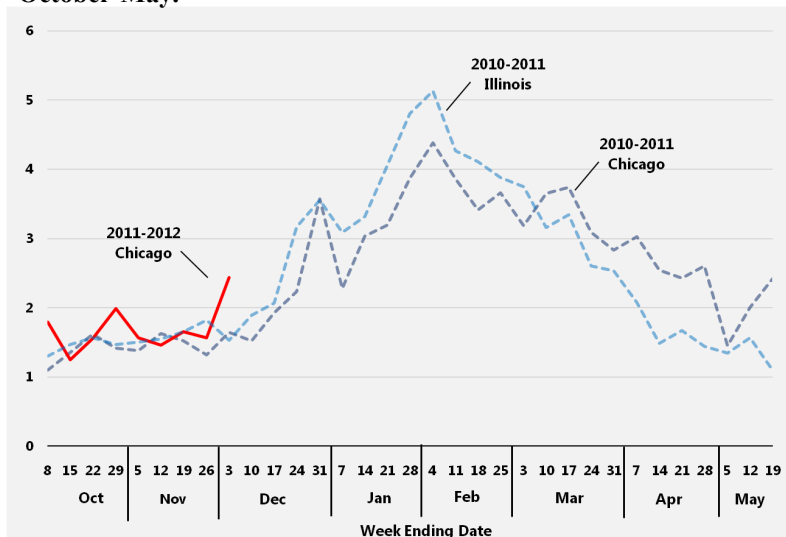


Figure 2. Weekly reported percent of outpatient clinic visits attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2011-2012) and previous season (Chicago and Illinois), October-May.



¹<https://www.chicagohan.org/ViewsFlash/servlet/viewsflash?cmd=showform&pollid=Vouchers1Indiv>; ²http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/city/en/depts/cdph/provdrs/flu/svcs/cdph_flu_shot_sitesacrosschicago.html; ³http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/infectious/immunizations_walk-inclinics.html; ⁴<https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/>; ⁵<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>; ⁶<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/surveillance.htm>; ⁷<http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports#influenza>