



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 remains elevated. Illinois is now reporting widespread geographic spread of influenza in the state and the percentage of outpatient doctor's office visits due to influenza-like illness is at its highest level this season. Although the reported number of specimens tested for influenza in local hospitals decreased slightly, the proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza is similar to rates noted during the peak of pandemic activity in November 2009. Influenza A strains account for 91% of all specimens testing positive for influenza, nearly evenly divided between H3N2 and H1N1 subtypes; 9% of influenza-positive specimens are type 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?

Since October, a total of 37 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.² Of these, three occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 5 (January 30-February 5, 2011). Seventy-eight percent of ICU patients are reportedly 25 years of age or older. The racial/ethnic distribution is 41% Black, 27% White, 19% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 8% not reported. One death was reported for week 5. Three deaths have been reported so far this season: two in ICU patients and one in a non-ICU patient.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of January 30-February 5, 2011, with 15 hospitals reporting, 8.6% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is higher than levels reported during the same surveillance week in 2010 (Figure 1). With 10 Chicago ILINet outpatient clinics reporting, 4% of doctor's office visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With seven laboratories reporting, 93 (24%) of 387 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 5. Among 85 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 30 were subtyped as H3N2, 22 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 33 were not subtyped. Eight specimens tested positive for influenza B (Figure 2).

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](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.

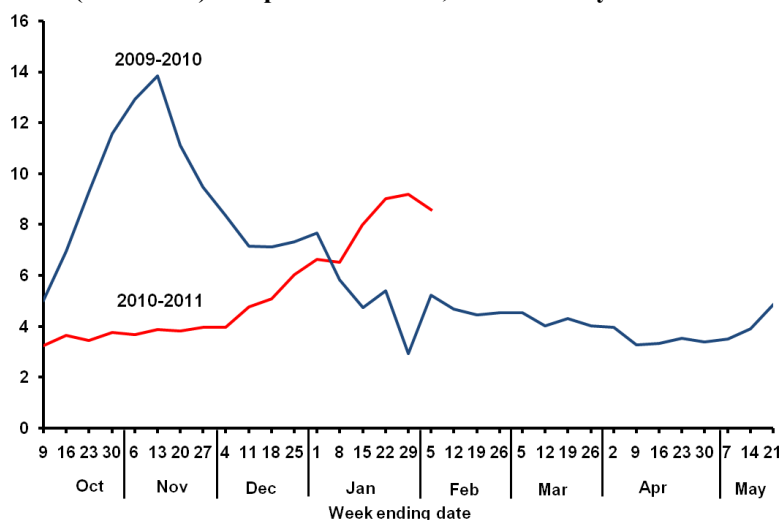
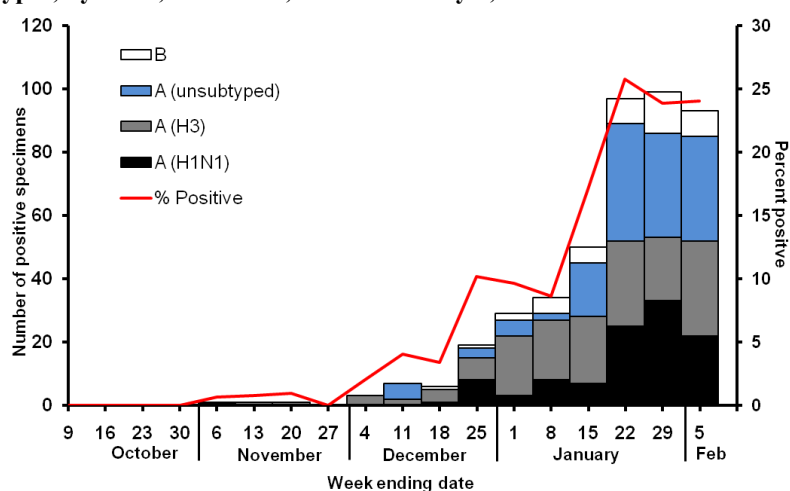


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-February 5, 2011.



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