



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

January 7, 2011

Chicago Department of Public Health
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What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago has increased. Nationally, influenza-like illness activity remains highest in the southeastern United States and New York City. Locally, influenza A strains continue to predominate, with both the H3N2 and 2009 H1N1 subtypes being reported; however, the H3N2 proportion has increased from 37% in surveillance week 51 to 65% in week 52. Sporadic influenza B strains have also been identified. These viruses are similar to the viruses chosen for the 2010-2011 flu vaccine, and remain susceptible to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir. Healthcare providers are reminded to consider influenza infection in the differential diagnosis of persons hospitalized with acute respiratory illness, and Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. 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](#)¹ and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Since the beginning of the influenza reporting season (October 2010), a total of ten influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH. Of these, 2 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 52 (December 26, 2010-January 1, 2011). Cases meeting the [current influenza reporting requirements](#)² should be reported to CDPH via [INEDSS](#)³.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of December 26, 2010-January 1, 2011, with 19 hospitals reporting, 6.6% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This represents the sixth consecutive week that an increase has been noted (Figure 1). With 9 Chicago ILINet outpatient clinics reporting, 4.6% of doctor's office visits were due to ILI. CDC uses data collected by ILINet to produce a measure of ILI activity by state. Illinois' estimate of ILI activity continues to increase; from "moderate" in week 51 to "high" in week 52 (Figure 2). Click on the map for more information on each state's activity levels.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 7 laboratories reporting, 29 (9.6%) of 301 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 52. Among 27 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 3 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, 19 were subtyped as H3N2, and 5 were not subtyped. Two specimen tested positive for influenza B.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Flu-View](#)⁴ 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](#)⁵ and [Suburban Cook County](#)⁶ 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.

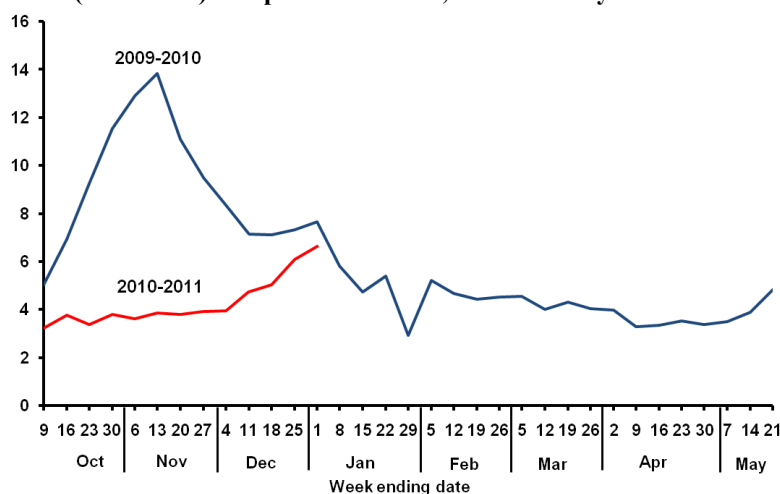
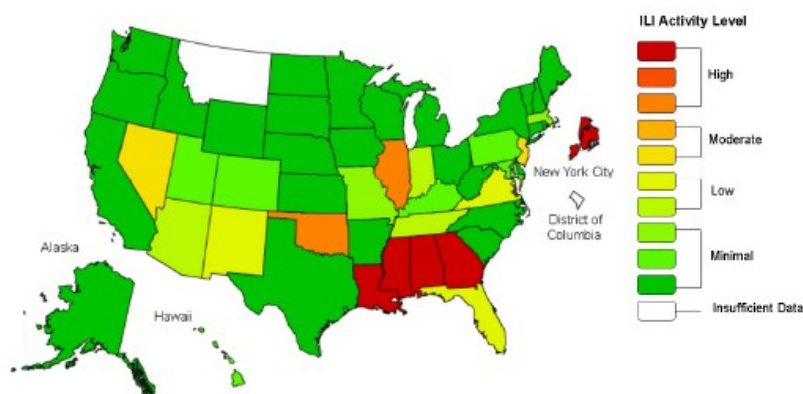


Figure 2. Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity* level by state, determined using the proportion of doctor's office visits due to ILI as reported through ILINet, December 26, 2010-January 1, 2011.



* activity levels are compared to the average percent of ILI visits during the spring and fall weeks when little or no influenza virus circulation is occurring. Minimal activity corresponds to ILI activity below the average and high activity corresponds to ILI activity much higher than the average. Data is preliminary and may change as more data is received.

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<https://www.idphnet.com>; ⁴<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; ⁵<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate10-11.htm>;

⁶http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation