



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Chicago Department of Public Health

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago is moderate. Locally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza has remained between 17-18% for the past three weeks. The influenza A H1N1 and H3N2 strains continue to circulate and account for 64% and 36% of subtyped influenza A specimens, respectively. However, the percentage of positive specimens typed as influenza B has increased for the second consecutive week. Type B accounts for 37% of all specimens testing positive for influenza for surveillance week 8 and this is the highest percentage seen so far this season. As of October 2010, 10% of all influenza-associated intensive care (ICU) hospitalizations have been positive for influenza 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/city/en/depts/cdph/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find_a_clinic.html)¹ and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Since October, a total of 70 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.² Of these, 9 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 8 (February 20-26, 2011). Fifteen (26%) of the reported ICU hospitalizations have been for pediatric patients. The racial/ethnic distribution to date is 39% Black, 29% White, 20% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 10% not reported or other. No deaths were reported for week 8. Nine deaths have been reported so far this season: 5 in ICU patients and 4 in non-ICU patients; the average age was 76 years.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of February 20-26, 2011, with 15 hospitals reporting, 7.7% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is one and half percentage points lower than the peak reported so far this season (Figure 1). With 5 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 4.5% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With seven laboratories reporting, 83 (18%) of 467 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 8. Among 52 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 13 were subtyped as H3N2, 23 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 16 were not subtyped. Thirty-one 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.

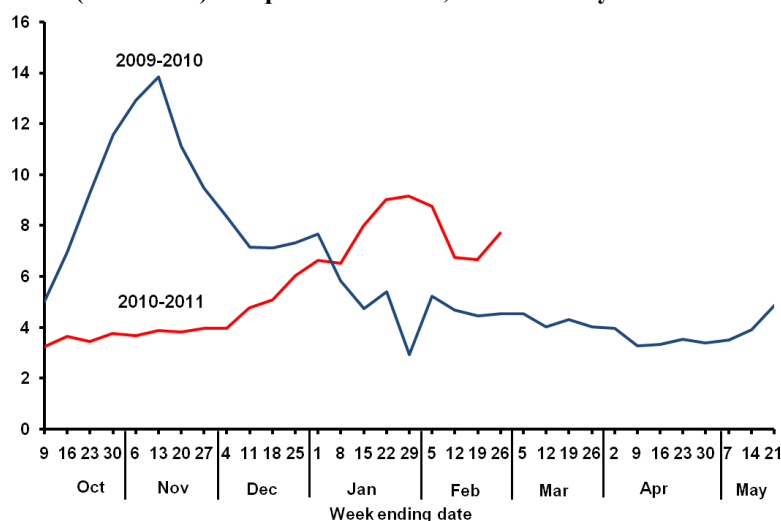
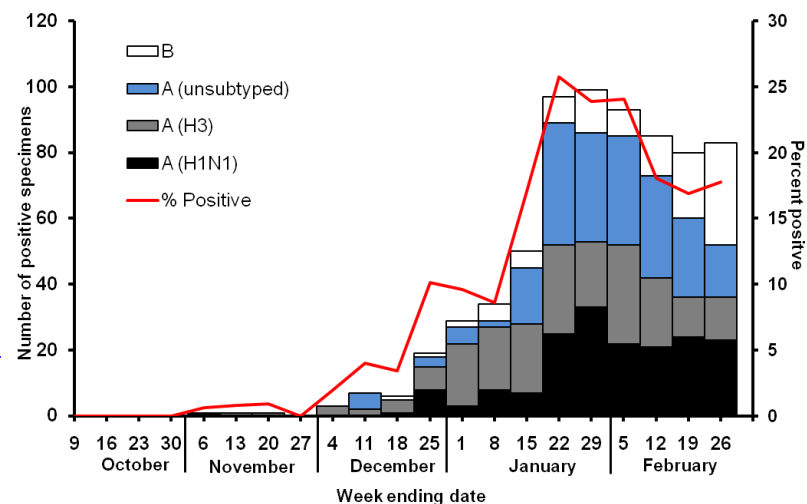


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-February 26, 2011.



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