



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 persists but is decreasing. Locally, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza A has decreased for the fourth consecutive week. However, the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza B has increased for the fourth consecutive week and type B accounted for 41% of positive influenza specimens tested in week 9, the highest level so far this season. Among the influenza A subtyped specimens, the H3N2 subtype increased from 36% in week 8 to 80% in week 9 while the H1N1 subtype decreased from 64% to 20%. As of October 2010, 14% 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?

The first pediatric death of this influenza season has been reported.² This brings the number of reported influenza-associated deaths since October in Chicago residents to 11. The average age at death of these individuals is 70 years. Eighty influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH. Of these, 7 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 9 (February 27-March 5, 2011). Twenty (25%) of the reported ICU hospitalizations have been for pediatric patients. The racial/ethnic distribution to date is 39% Black, 29% White, 21% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 9% not reported or other.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of February 27-March 5, 2011, with 16 hospitals reporting, 6.8% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is nearly two and half percentage points lower than the peak reported so far this season (Figure 1). With 5 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 3.7% of visits were due to ILI.

Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 6 laboratories reporting, 49 (12.5%) of 392 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 9. Among 29 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 12 were subtyped as H3N2, 3 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 14 were not subtyped. Twenty specimens tested positive for influenza B (Figure 2). The decrease in the total number of specimens and positive results this week is due in part to data not being available for analysis from one laboratory.

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.

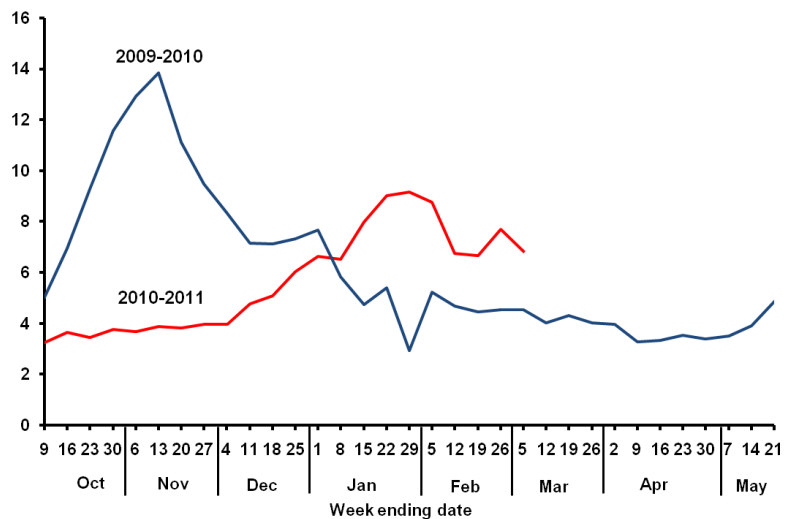
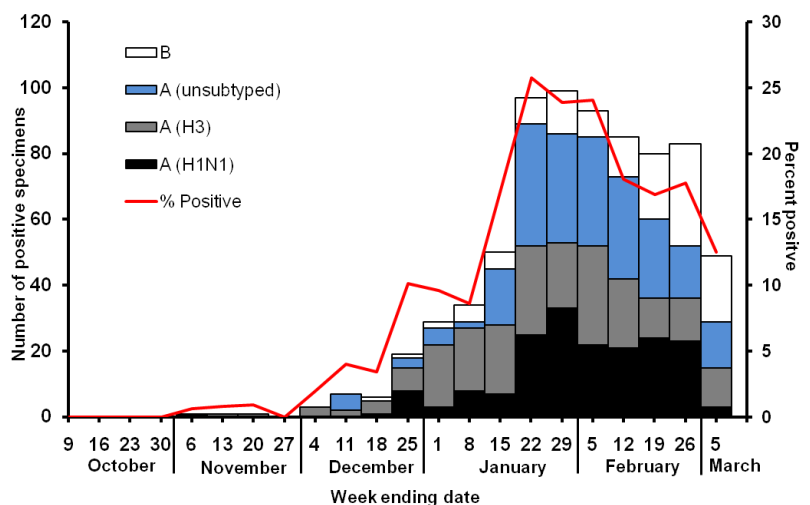


Figure 2. Influenza-positive tests reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals that are equipped to identify influenza by types, by week, October 9, 2010-March 5, 2011.



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