



# Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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Chicago Department of Public Health

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## What is the risk?

As of January 22, 2010, the risk of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) influenza infection in Chicago is low. The numbers of severe influenza infections, influenza-like illnesses, and positive influenza tests continue to decline. Due to the possibility of a recurrence of heightened activity in the coming months, all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to protect themselves from infection by getting vaccinated with the pandemic influenza vaccine. Chicagoans should ask their healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccine availability. For those without a healthcare provider or whose healthcare providers do not have the pandemic vaccine, a schedule of City of Chicago pandemic vaccine clinics is available by calling 311.

## Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Two confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1)-associated hospitalizations in Chicago residents have been reported for surveillance week 2 (January 10 – 16, 2010). This number is the lowest reported thus far since the beginning of September 2009 and represents the tenth consecutive week that a decline has been noted (figure 1).

## How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

With 17 Chicago hospitals reporting, 5.6% of emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (i.e. fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is approaching levels seen prior to the wave of increased activity that took place in early October 2009. Among seven outpatient clinics reporting for the week of January 10 – 16, 2010, 1.6% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness. This level of activity is lower than levels seen during the same surveillance week during previous influenza seasons (figure 2).

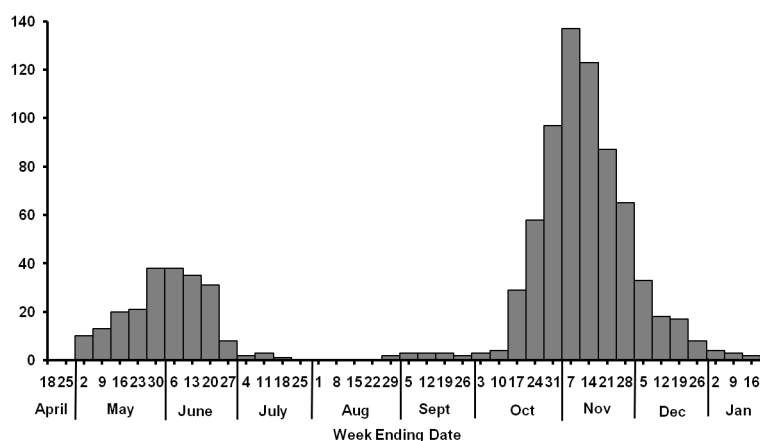
## Which influenza strains are circulating?

For the week of January 10 – 16, 2010, with seven laboratories reporting, all 6 influenza A-positive specimens for which subtyping was performed were reported as presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1); no influenza B or seasonal influenza A strains were reported. The percentage of positive specimens (1%) is at the lowest level reported since September 2009, when influenza strain information was first collected by CDPH.

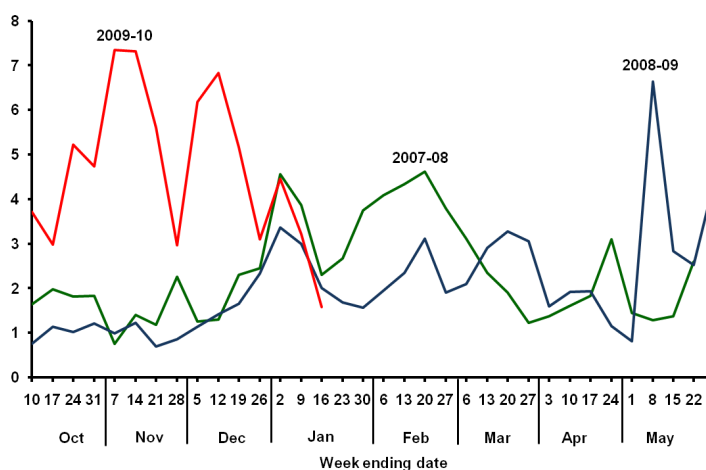
## Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)<sup>1</sup> 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/fluupdate09-10.htm)<sup>2</sup> and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)<sup>3</sup> are also available online.

**Figure 1. Reported number of hospitalizations associated with confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1), Chicago, by week of specimen collection, April 2009 - January 16, 2010**



**Figure 2. Percent of patient visits to enrolled doctor's offices attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2009-10) and previous two seasons, October-May**



<sup>1</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; <sup>2</sup><http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm>; <sup>3</sup>[http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu\\_current\\_situation](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)