



Chicago Flu Update

Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

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News & Updates

Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. 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 influenza vaccine, a schedule of [City of Chicago influenza vaccination clinics](#) is available on the City website and by calling 311. To locate the closest City of Chicago clinic or retail pharmacy, go to www.chicagoflushots.org.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued [influenza testing and reporting recommendations](#)². Suspected novel and variant influenza, pediatric influenza-associated deaths, influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations and outbreaks of influenza-like illness in a congregate setting should all be reported to CDPH via [INEDSS](#)³.

What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection is low.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

During surveillance week 42, no influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (**Figure 1**).

Since October 2, 2016, 2 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; both were positive for influenza A (1 H3N2 and 1 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]).

Influenza among the 65 and over population

During the 2015-2016 season, the rate of reported influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations was highest among those 65 years of age and older (**Figure 1a**). This age group also accounted for 73% of all influenza and pneumonia related deaths in Chicago for that season. A high-dose influenza vaccine specifically designed for those 65 years and older has been shown to be 24.2% more effective in preventing influenza in this age group relative to a standard-dose vaccine.*

Figure 1a. Cumulative rate of reported influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations by age group for the 2015-2016 influenza season, October-May.

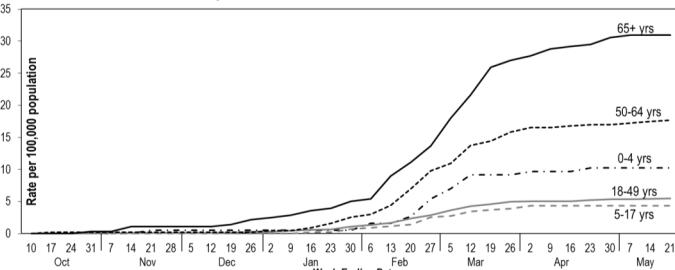


Figure 1. Number of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents, for current season (2016-2017) by influenza type and last season (2015-2016), October-May.

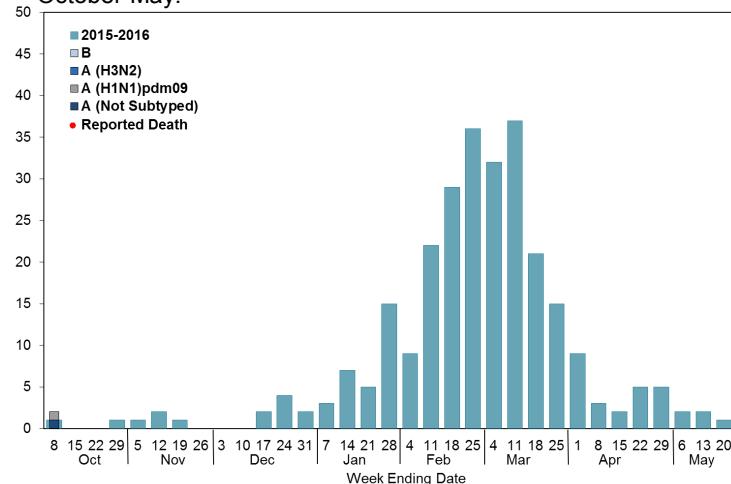
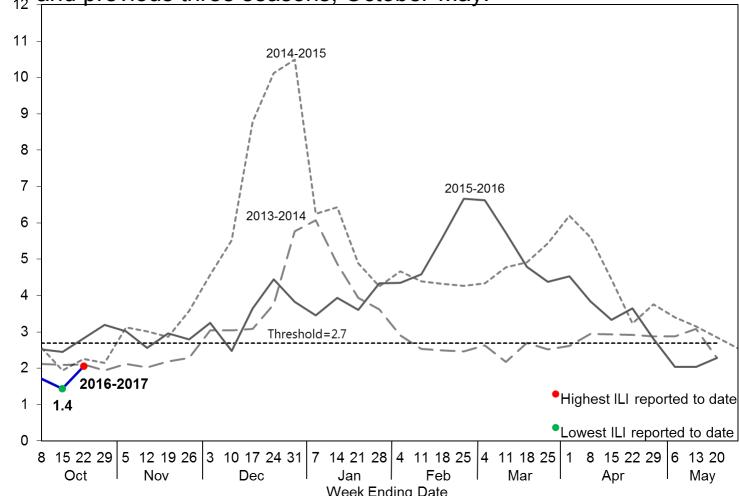


Figure 2. Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness based on manual reports by individual hospitals, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous three seasons, October-May.



How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

CDPH receives data from influenza surveillance sites across Chicago, which report the total number of patient visits seen weekly, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI) (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). Several hospitals in Chicago that provide emergent care report on a weekly basis the total number of emergency department visits, and of those visits, the number with ILI. For surveillance week 42, with 8 hospitals reporting, 2.1% of emergency department visits were due to ILI (**Figure 2**).

* Diaz Granados CA, Dunning AJ, Kimmel M, et al. Efficacy of High-Dose Versus Standard-Dose Influenza Vaccine in Older Adults. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2014;371(7):635-645.

¹ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/influenza/2015-influenza-walk-in-clinic-schedule.html

² <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ohp-labs-influenzaannual-testing-and-reportingmemo-09222016.pdf>; ³ <https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/>

ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes emergency department chief complaint data submitted daily by Chicago hospitals. ILI activity is determined solely based on the patient's chief complaint and does not take into account the entire medical record, as the ILI activity reported in Figure 2 does.

Since July 2016, 27 out of the 28 acute care hospitals in Chicago began submitting data to the ESSENCE platform, covering nearly every emergency department visit in the city of Chicago. **Figure 3** represents ILI by hospital location (Northside, Southside, Westside) encompassing approximately ten hospitals within each area. For surveillance week 42, 1.2% of all emergency department visits were due to ILI; Southside hospitals had slightly higher ILI at 1.5%, Northside hospitals at 1.3% and Westside hospitals had the lowest at <1.0%.

Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC's Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (**ILINet**) by reporting on the number of patients with ILI seen weekly. For surveillance week 42, with 20 facilities reporting, 3.8% of visits were due to influenza-like illness (**Figure 4**).

Which influenza strains are circulating?

Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza subtyping. For surveillance week 42, with 5 laboratories reporting, 4 of the 407 specimens tested for influenza were positive for influenza A (3 H3N2 and 1 (not subtyped).

Since October 2, 2016, 5 of 1,347 specimens tested for influenza were positive for influenza A (3 H3N2 and 2 (unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) (**Figure 5**). The cumulative percent of specimens testing positive for influenza is similar to previous seasons during the same time period (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Cumulative percent of specimens testing positive for influenza by subtype for the current season (2016-2017) and the previous three seasons, Chicago, Weeks 40-42.

Influenza Season	% Positive	% A H3N2	% A H1N1pdm09	% A Not Subtyped	% B
2013-2014	<1	25	0	25	50
2014-2015	<1	40	0	20	40
2015-2016	<1	29	43	14	14
2016-2017	<1	60	0	40	0

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 anti-viral resistance, severity of illness, and other topics. Updates specific to [Illinois](#)⁵ and [Suburban Cook County](#)⁶ are also available online. Current and archived issues of the *Chicago Flu Update* can be found on the CDPH website section [Current Flu Situation in Chicago](#)⁷.

Figure 3. Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness by hospital region based on chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous season (2015-2016), October -May.

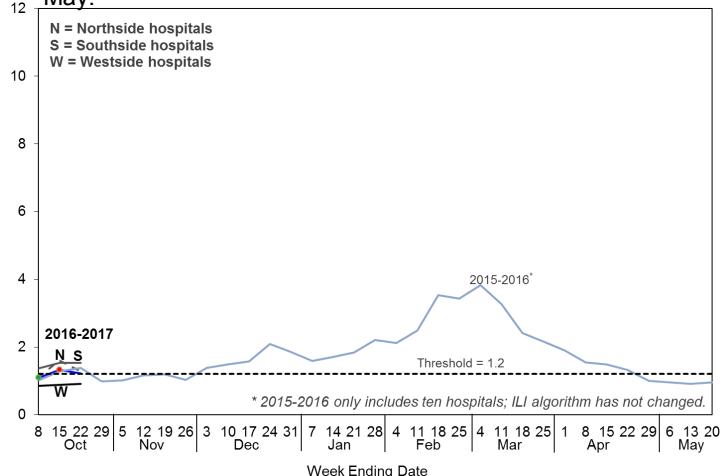


Figure 4. Percent of medically-attended outpatient visits attributed to influenza-like illness as reported by ILINet facilities, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous three seasons, October-May.

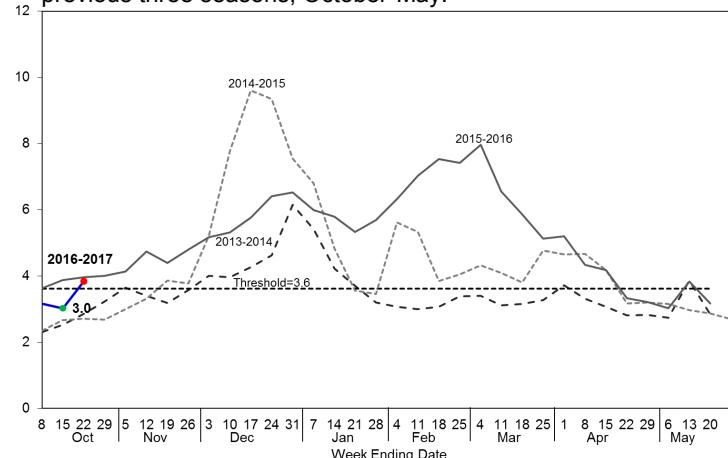
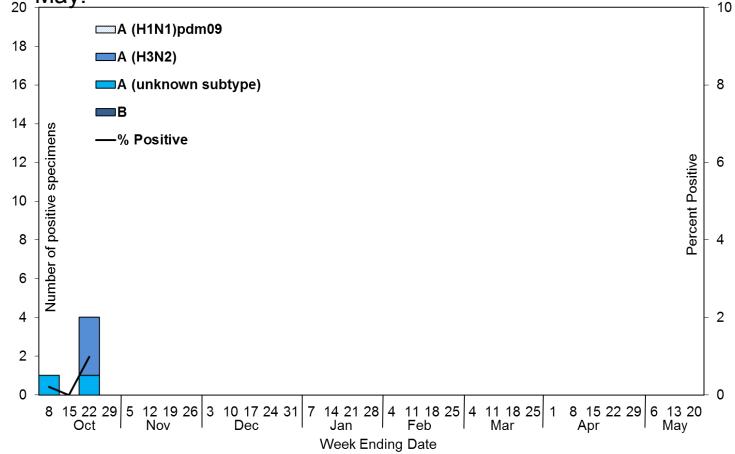


Figure 5. Percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza by subtype as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2016-2017) October-May.



All data are preliminary and may change as more reports are received.

⁴<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>; ⁵<http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/surveillance.htm>; ⁶<http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports#Influenza>;

⁷http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/influenza/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html