



Chicago Flu Update



Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

November 29, 2019

Allison Arwady, MD, MPH, Acting Commissioner

News & Updates

Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans 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](#)¹ 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.



What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection is low.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

For the week of November 17-23, 2019, one influenza-associated ICU hospitalization was reported.

Since September 29, 2019, six influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; all were positive for influenza A (2 H3N2, 2 H1N1pdm09, 2 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) (Figure 1).

Which influenza strains are circulating?

Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR. For the week of November 17-23, 2019, 17 of the 835 (2.0%) specimens tested for influenza were positive; 10 typed as influenza A (1 H3N2, 2 H1N1pdm09, and 7 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 7 typed as influenza B (Figure 2).

Since September 29, 2019, 47 of 6,223 (<1%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 24 typed as influenza A (9 H3N2, 4 H1N1pdm09, and 11 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 23 typed as influenza B. The cumulative percent of specimens testing positive for influenza is similar to previous seasons during the same time period (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Number of influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents, for the current season (2019-2020) and previous season (2018-2019), October-May.

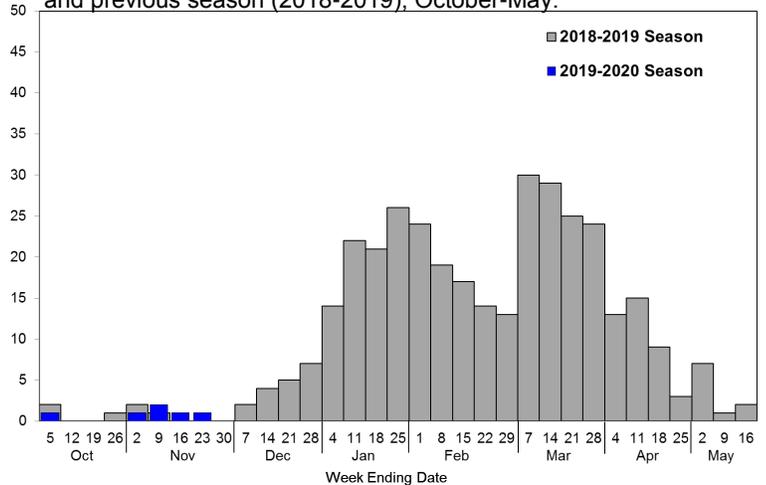


Figure 2. Percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza by subtype as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2019-2020) October-May, 2019.

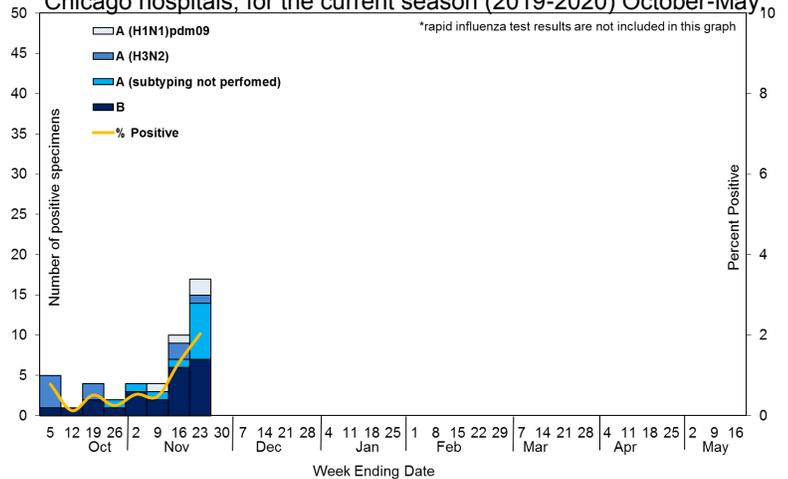
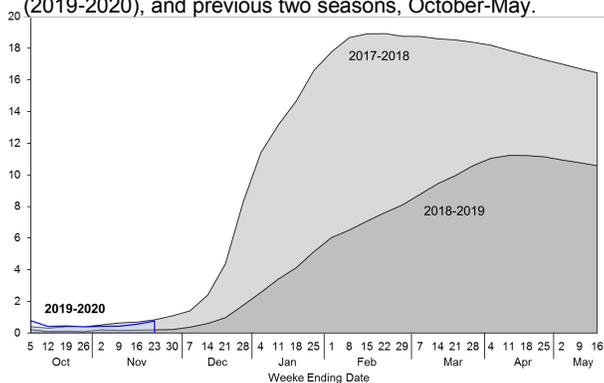


Figure 3. Cumulative percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2019-2020), and previous two seasons, October-May.



GET YOUR FLU SHOT
WWW.CHICAGO.GOV/FLU — * * * * —

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

¹ https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdp/h/supp_info/health-protection/flu-clinics-in-the-city-of-chicago.html

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC's Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by reporting on a weekly basis the total number of outpatient clinic visits, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI). For the week of November 17-23, 2019, 110 of the 5,916 (1.9%) reported outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness, which is similar to Illinois at 2.1% (Figure 4).

In addition to ILINet, ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes the chief complaints of patients visiting emergency departments to monitor for influenza-like illness. Currently, ESSENCE captures nearly every emergency department visit in the city on a daily basis. For the week of November 17-23, 2019, 456 of the 23,768 (1.9%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 5).

Figure 6 represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by patient zip code. For the week of November 17-23, 2019, 17 of 59 (29%) zip codes had moderate to high ILI activity levels; this is lower than last season where 41% of zip codes were at moderate to high levels for the same time period.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's FluView² 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 Illinois³ and Suburban Cook County⁴ 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](#)⁵.

Reporting Information

Illinois Department of Public Health recently issued [Influenza Testing and Reporting Guidance](#)⁶. The Chicago Department of Public Health has previously issued guidance on [reporting influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations](#)⁷. Healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (INEDSS)⁸. For more information contact: SyndromicSurveillance@cityofchicago.org

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 (2019-2020) and previous season, October-May.

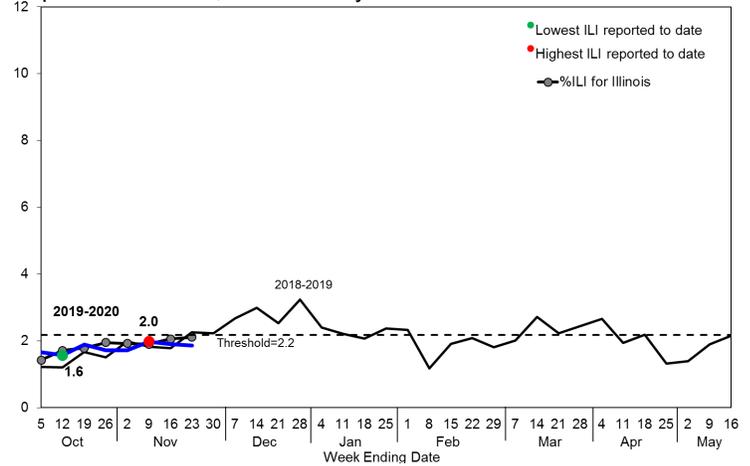


Figure 5. Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness for Chicago zip codes based on chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2019-2020) and previous two seasons, October-May.

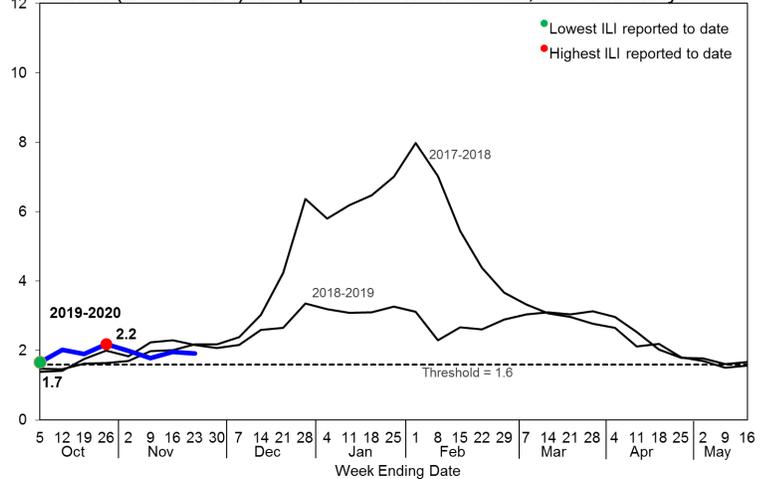
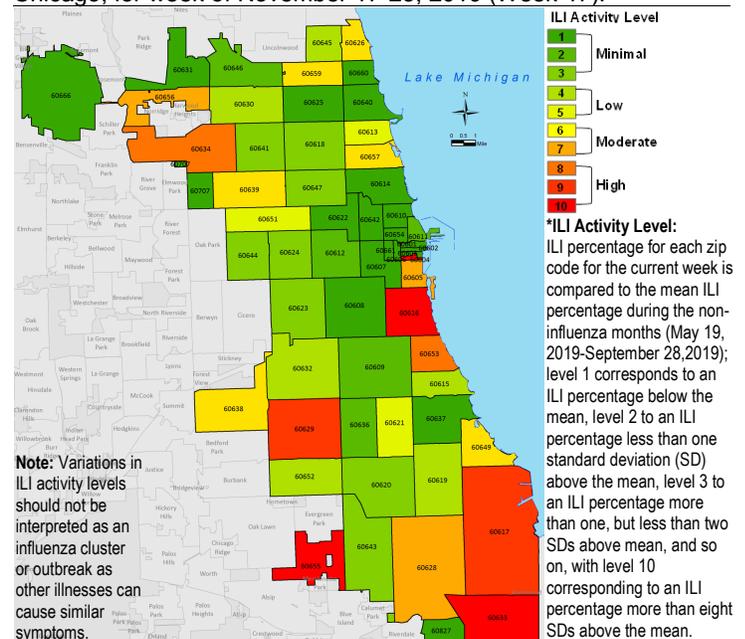


Figure 6. Influenza-like Illness (ILI) activity level by patient zip code determined by chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, for week of November 17-23, 2019 (Week 47).



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

² <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>; ³ <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/influenza-surveillance>; ⁴ <https://ccdphcd.shinyapps.io/influenza/>;

⁵ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/health-protection/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html;

⁶ www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20190916idphohp-annual-flu-testing.pdf ;

⁷ <https://www.chicagohan.org/documents/14171/39923/Reporting+Influenza-Associated+ICU+Hospitalizations/bc2f49b2-cf74-487c-9441-0b0a930e4b41>; ⁸ <httpsdph.partner.illinois.gov/>