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What is Influenza?

Influenza is a virus which primarily causes a respiratory illness (flu), which can then be spread to others by tiny air droplets when people talk, cough, or sneeze. Symptoms include cough, sore throat, runny nose, fever, headaches, and body aches. Older people, young children, and people with certain chronic conditions or weakened immune systems, are at high risk for severe flu complications that may lead to hospitalization, or even death. **The best way to prevent the flu or lessen its symptoms is to get the flu vaccine. All individuals 6 months and older should be vaccinated annually.**

This report summarizes the weekly flu activity in Lake County, Illinois. The typical Influenza “flu” season runs from early October (estimated week 40) through the end of March (week 13) but may run longer. Please note all data are preliminary and are subject to change.

Weekly Summary

The following data was obtained from the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (I-NEDSS).

| Geographic Area | Influenza-related intensive care unit admissions | | Influenza-related pediatric deaths (0–18 years) | | Influenza/Influenza-like illness ^a cluster or outbreaks in Congregate settings ^b | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| | Week – No. of Cases | Season Total | Week – No. of Cases | Season Total | Week – No. of Cases | Season Total |
| Lake County | Wk 01 – 0 | 0 | Wk 01 – 0 | 0 | Wk 01 – 0 | 0 |
| Illinois ^c | Wk 53 – 0 | 8 | Wk 53 – 0 | 0 | Wk 53 – 0 | 0 |

^a Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as fever (temperature $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ [37.8°C]) and cough and/or sore throat without a known cause other than influenza.

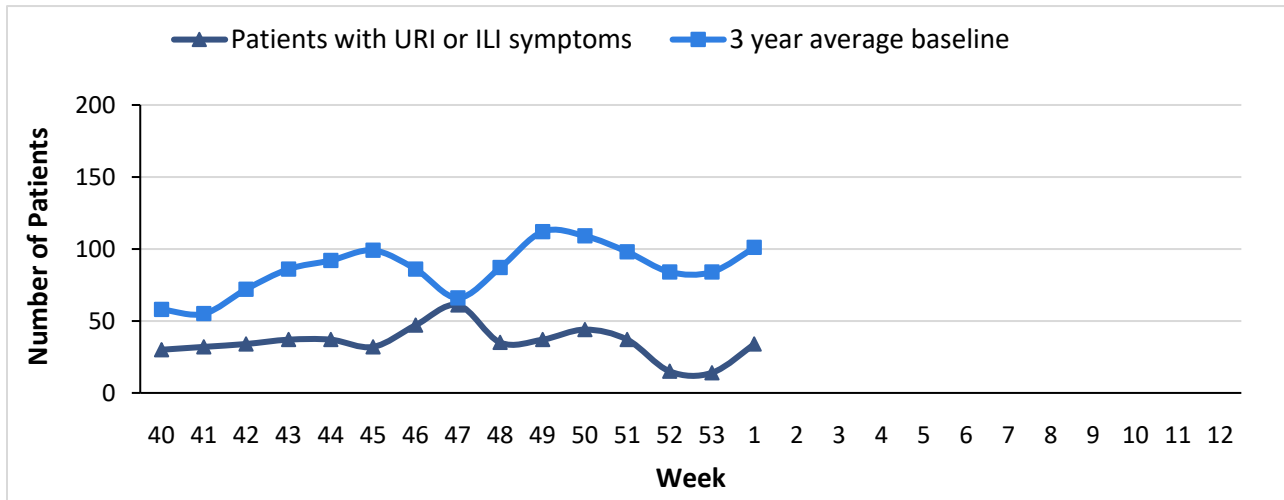
^b Congregate settings are defined as long term care facilities, group homes, hospitals, and correctional facilities.

^c Illinois Department of Public Health have a different reporting week.

Lake County Health Department Virologic Surveillance

Lake County Health Department, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) include 8 outpatient clinics. In 2018, the FQHCs had 76,247 healthcare provider visits. The total number of patients with upper respiratory tract infections (URI) or ILI was obtained from electronic health record for these sites.

Figure 1. The number of patients diagnosed with upper respiratory tract infections (URI) or ILI, as reported by Lake County Health Department, Federally Qualified Health Centers, by week for the influenza season 2020–2021



The 3-year average baseline is defined as the average number of patients with URI or ILI symptoms for weeks 40–53 for 2017, 2018 & 2019. **Starting week 1 onward, the 3-year average will be for 2018, 2019 and 2020.**

Influenza-Associated Intensive Care Unit Hospitalizations in Lake County

There were 0 influenza-associated intensive care unit admissions reported to LCHD/CHC during **week 01**. A total of 0 influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported for the 2020–2021 season.

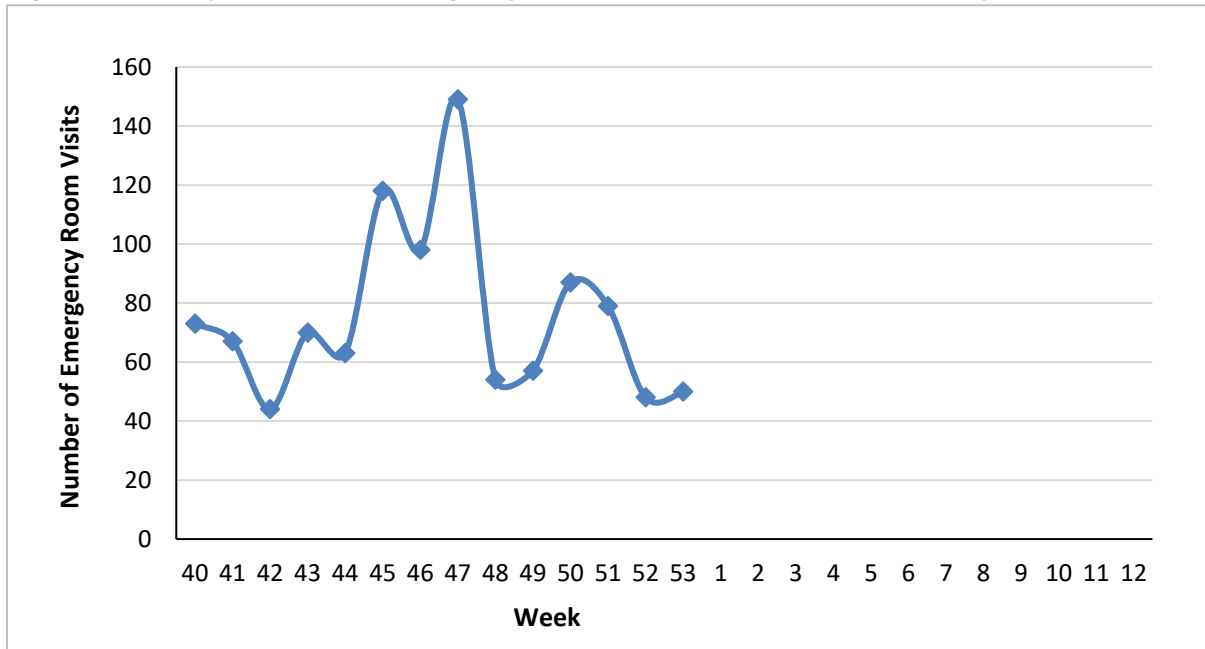
Absenteeism due to Influenza-like Illness in Lake County Schools

Weeks 40–53, (2020): No data reported from Lake County schools during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Week 01, (2021): No data reported from Lake County schools during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Emergency Room visits in Lake County due to Influenza-like Illness

The Illinois Department of Public Health collects emergency department visits from all acute care hospitals in Illinois for syndromic surveillance (ESSENCE surveillance system). In this report, the visits are classified as ILI based on the chief complaints that include terms “influenza” or “fever and cough or sore throat” similar to the CDC ILINET definition while excluding terms unrelated to ILI. In **week 53**, we saw **50** emergency room visits for ILI in the seven Lake County Hospitals.

Figure 4. Weekly number of Emergency Room visits due to ILI, Lake County, IL, 2020-2021

For questions regarding influenza and reportable diseases, please contact Communicable Disease (CD program) at (847) 377-8130.

Week 01 (2021) ER Visits for ILI will be reported during Week 02.