

# Influenza Surveillance Report

Division of Disease Prevention and Control  
*Public Health Informatics*  
 CDC MMWR Week 20:  
 May 16, 2021 to May 22, 2021  
 Influenza Activity by County, State, and National Levels

Houston/ Harris County:	Texas:	CDC:
Increased	Increased	Minimal

## Highlights

- The Houston Health Department (HHD) conducts seasonal influenza surveillance from October (week 40) to May (week 22). In week 20, the percentage of reported influenza-like illnesses (ILI) detected in emergency centers in Houston/Harris County was **.81%** which **increased** from the previous week. The flu vaccine is recommended for the entire season.

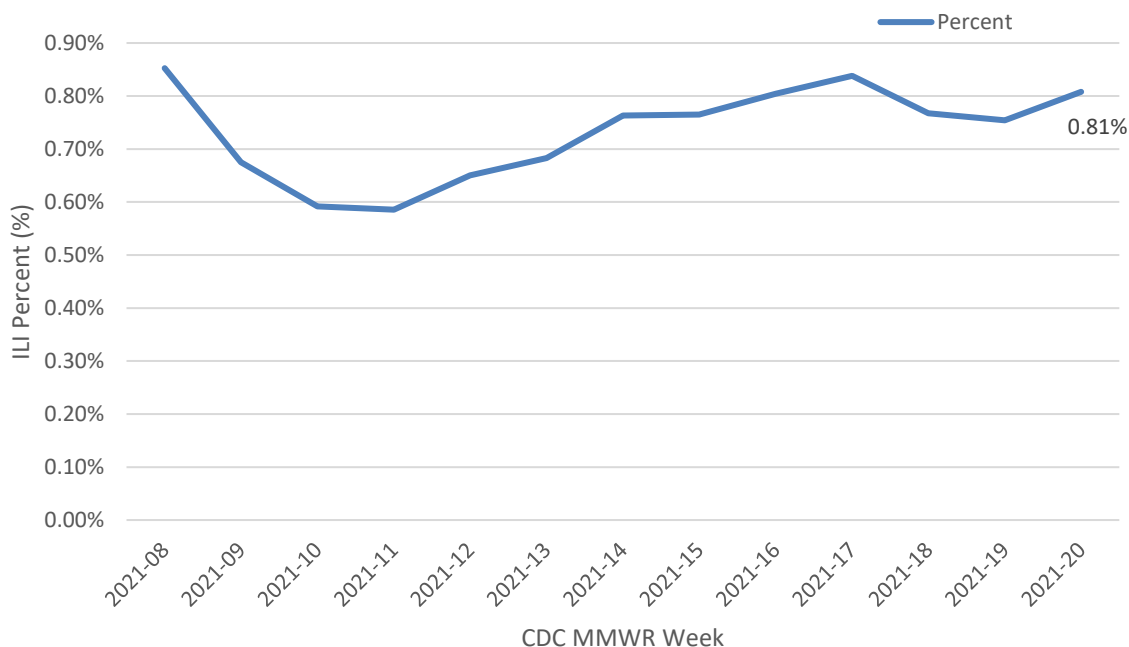
## Texas

- The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI (1.71 %) was below the baseline (5.26%) and no pneumonia and influenza deaths have been reported in Texas during the 2020-2021 flu season. No influenza-associated pediatric death was reported during week 20. No influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported in Texas during the 2020-2021 influenza season. No institutional outbreak was reported in long-term care facilities, and no school outbreaks or school closures reported during week 20 during the 2020-2021 season.

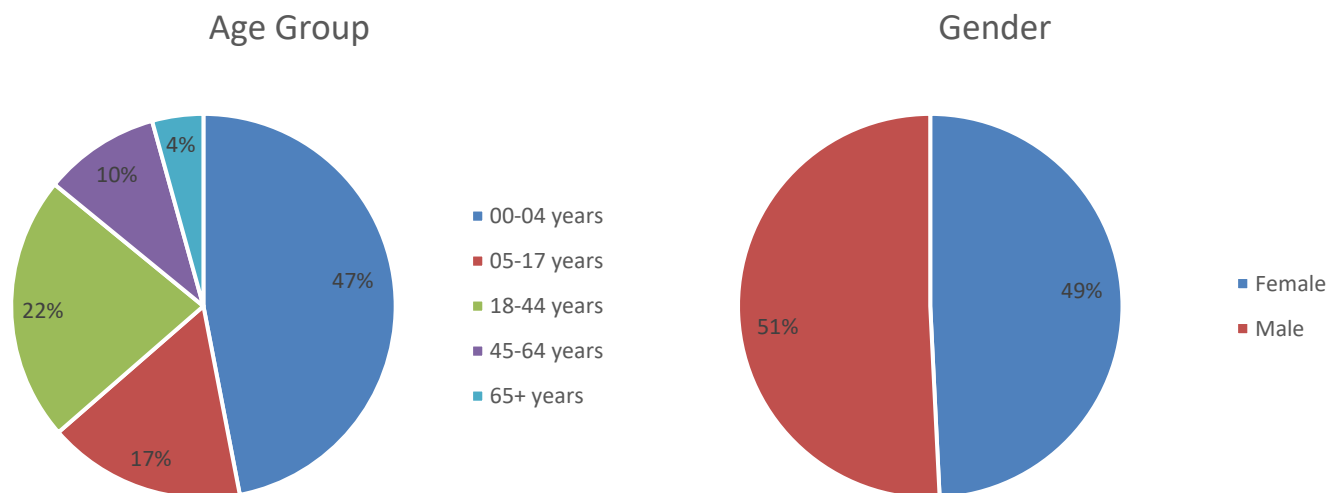
## National

- At the national level during week 20, 0.1% of specimens tested and reported to the CDC by clinical labs were positive for influenza.

## Syndromic Surveillance: ILI activity trend in 2020-2021



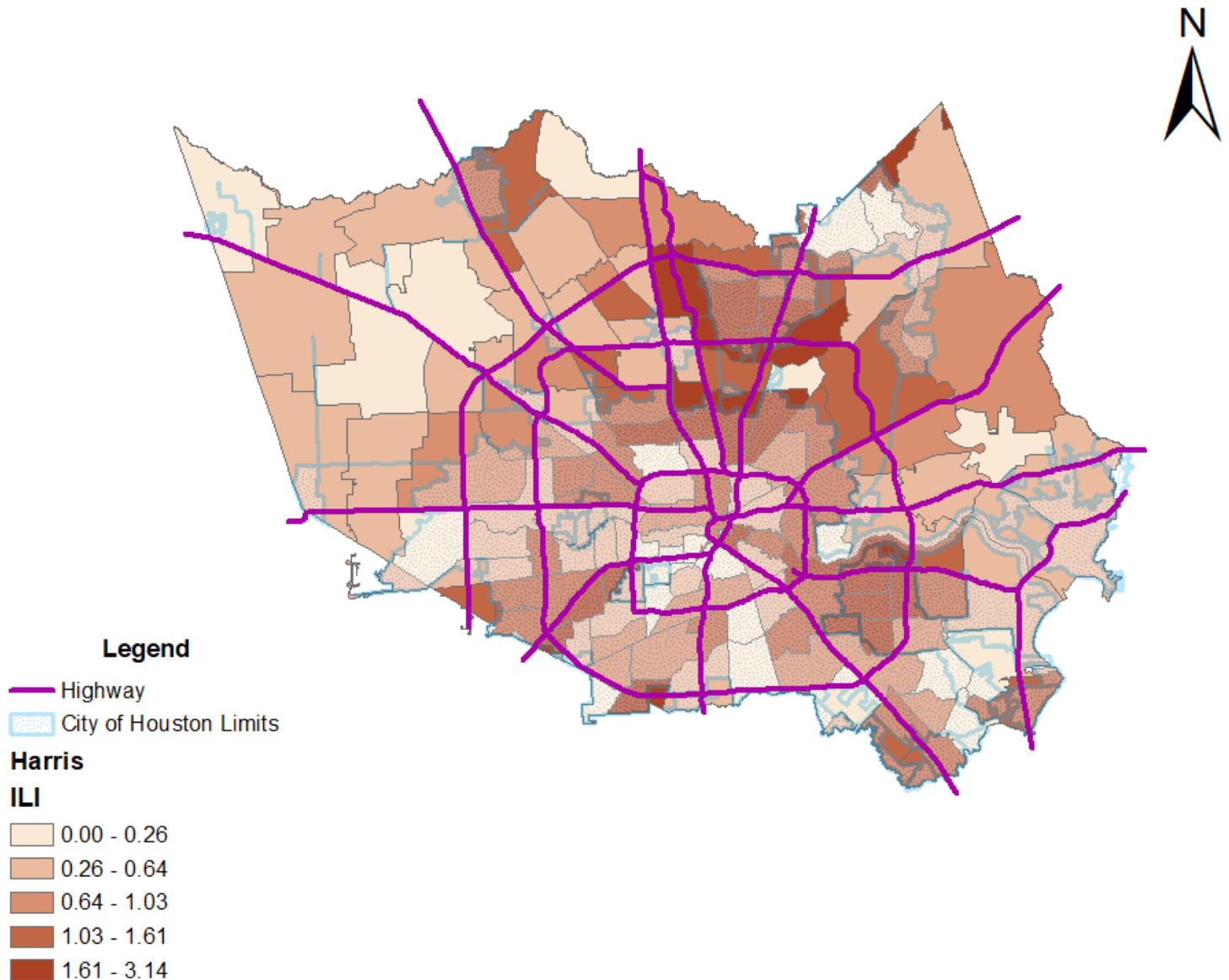
## Syndromic Surveillance: 2020-2021 Influenza Season Age and Gender Distribution



During week 20, .81% of emergency center (EC) visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI) complaints. Of the 1168 patients presenting with ILI, the age group that recorded the most EC visits was 00-04 years old (47%). Males accounted for 51% of patients presenting with ILI.

*NOTE: ILI activity is assessed using information provided by the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System and includes data from 102 hospitals and 17 school-based clinics. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as the mention of fever AND cough, OR fever AND sore throat, OR flu in the patient's Emergency Department (ED) chief complaint. These data do not represent laboratory confirmed cases of influenza nor do they represent all ED visits in Houston/Harris County.*

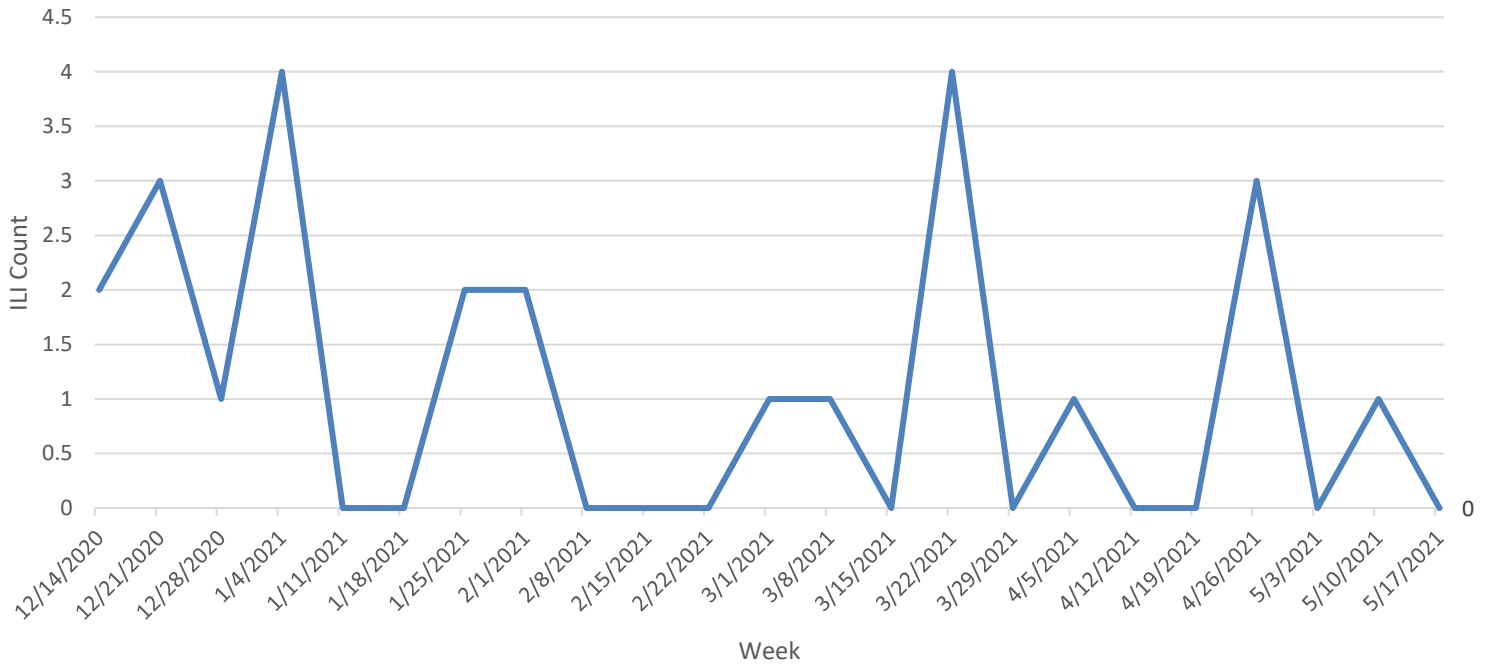
## Syndromic Surveillance: Geographic Distribution Map of ILI



During week 20, the zip codes with the highest percent of ED visits (1.95 or greater) were: 77506, 77016, 77031, 77037, 77502, 77081, 77327, 77354, 77073, and 77074.

*NOTE: Houston/Harris County ILI distribution map was created using data provided by 119 facilities that voluntarily provide data based on chief complaints in the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System (STSSS). This map reflects the percentage of ILI cases from each residential zip code during the current week of reporting. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as the mention of fever AND cough, OR fever AND sore throat, OR flu in the patient's ED chief complaint. The data do not represent laboratory confirmed cases of influenza nor do they represent all ED visits in Houston/Harris County.*

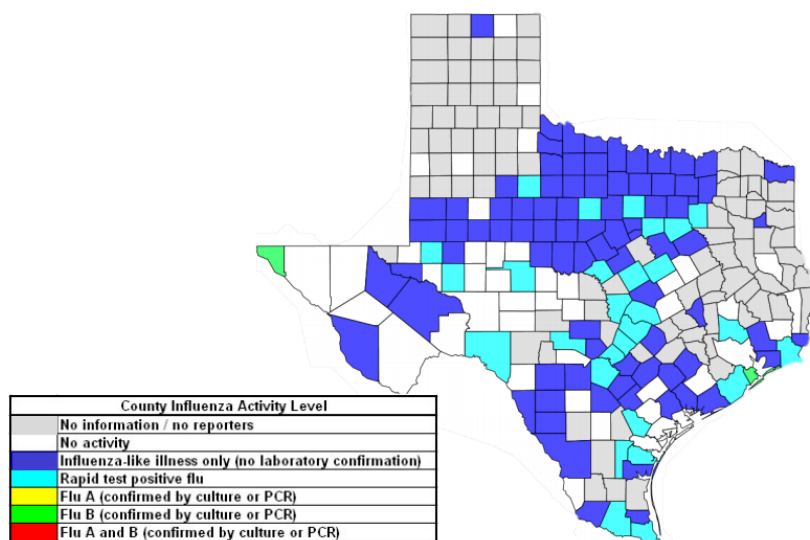
## Flu Near You: ILI per week



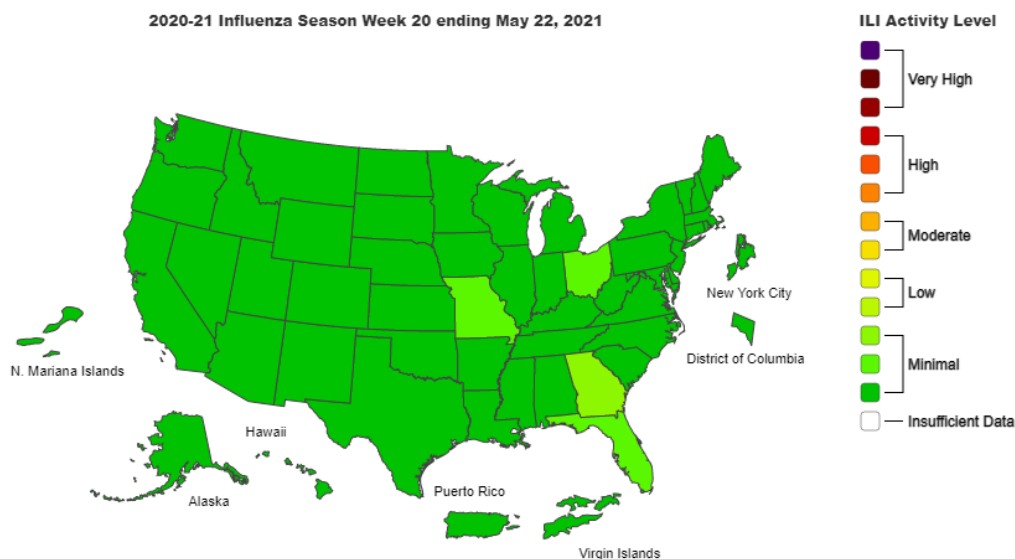
Flu near You (FNY) is a participatory surveillance tool that compliments traditional disease surveillance. The count of Flu Near You ([flunearyou.org](http://flunearyou.org)) users reporting ILI in the week of 5/17/2021 is 0. See the last page for information on how to participate.

# Texas and National Influenza and ILI Activity

A Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report Prepared by the Influenza Division  
 Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Activity Level Indicator Determined by Data Reported to ILINet



**NOTE:** Influenza activity level corresponds to current MMWR week only and does not reflect previous weeks' activity. Most of influenza cases are not reportable by law to the Texas Department of State Health Services. This map contains data from sentinel sites and does not represent all influenza cases in the state. Positive laboratory results are reported according to specimen collection date or date received in the lab if the former is unknown. <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU>.



**NOTE:** Data collected in ILINet are used to produce a measure of ILI activity by state. Activity levels are based on the percent of outpatient visits in a state due to ILI and are compared to the average percent of ILI visits that occur during spring and fall weeks with little or no influenza virus circulation. This map uses the proportion of outpatient visits to health care providers for ILI to measure the ILI activity level within a state. It does not, however, measure the extent of geographic spread of flu within a state. Therefore, outbreaks occurring in a single city could cause the state to display high activity levels. Data collected in ILINet may disproportionately represent certain populations within a state, and therefore may not accurately depict the full picture of influenza activity for the whole state. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>

The *Houston Influenza Surveillance Weekly Report* is available on the Houston Health Department web site at:  
<https://www.houstontx.gov/health/Epidemiology>

Flu Near You is a participatory surveillance (crowd sourcing) tool which complements traditional disease surveillance activities. Registered users can obtain real-time information on flu activity and influenza vaccines in the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area. Flu Near You features include:

- Report symptoms
- Find vaccines
- Map flu cases in the Greater Houston Metropolitan area
- Get flu news
- Share on social media

This season HHD invites you to register for Flu Near You at <https://flunearyou.org>



**NOTE:**

*Influenza-like Illness (ILI) is defined as fever (temperature  $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) plus a cough OR a sore throat, in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.*

*Houston ILI baselines were determined using the same method as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Regional ILI baseline.*

*Data was obtained or accessed through the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System. However, any conclusions drawn from use of this data do not represent the official views of any consortium member jurisdiction.*

\*\*\*No Athena or school data was reported for Week 20.

Additional information regarding Houston, Texas and national ILI activity can be accessed at:

- <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/>
- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/influenza/surveillance/2019-2020.aspx>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>
- <http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>

\*\* Above baseline means the % of visits for ILI is above the region-specific baseline of 5.26%.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/overview.htm>

\*\*\* The numbers for pediatric flu-related deaths may change as information becomes available. Flu-related deaths in adults are not required to be reported to the health department.

\*\*\*\* Electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) was interrupted due to system outages. The actual ELR volume may be higher than shown. Influenza passive surveillance report is based on the case creation date.

Please note, some aspects of influenza surveillance may be affected by current COVID-19 response activities.

## Houston Health Department

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