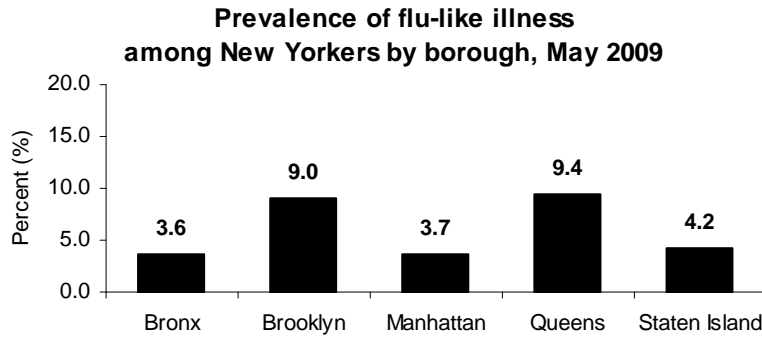


# Prevalence of Flu-like Illness in New York City: May 2009

A Preliminary Report from the Health Department

## 6.9% of New Yorkers reported being sick with flu-like symptoms in May

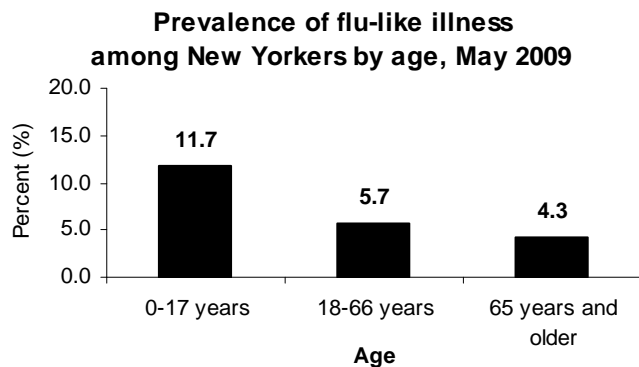


- One in seven New Yorkers (6.9%) reported having symptoms consistent with flu-like illness during the first three weeks of May.
- Queens and Brooklyn residents reported higher rates of flu symptoms than those in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.

**Self-reported flu-like symptoms, as asked in this study, do not necessarily equal H1N1 flu.**

Because the outbreak of H1N1 did not begin to spread widely until mid-May, some people who reported flu-like illness in the survey may not have had H1N1, but instead may have had seasonal flu, strep throat or other illnesses that resembled flu. Thus, these numbers are likely an overestimate of how many people actually had H1N1 infection. However, it is likely that more New Yorkers have become ill since May, because the peak period of H1N1 activity occurred after survey was completed.

## Flu-like illness also varied by age in the first three weeks of May



- Prevalence of flu symptoms during May was highest among children (11.7%) and lowest among older adults (4.3%).
- Queens residents reported the most flu-like illness among children, with 17% of Queens teens and children younger than 18 affected.

## Flu-Like Illness in New York City

**About this study.**

From May 20-27, 2009, a representative telephone survey of 1,005 NYC households was conducted to assess the prevalence of influenza-like illness (ILI) among NYC residents during the first three weeks of May 2009.

Respondents were asked about illness with symptoms of fever AND cough or sore throat among members of their households.

**This study provides a snapshot of flu in NYC during one time period.**

The prevalence of influenza can range from 10-40% among children at the height of flu season. This study suggests that the transmission of novel H1N1 flu during May was not more widespread or rapid than seen in past flu seasons, but additional surveys are needed to understand potential H1N1 activity after this time period.