



Achoo!

Interest in the Flu Spreads

{A MaxPoint Interest Index}

Influenza is a hot topic right now. Media outlets are abuzz with the latest reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and pharmacies are seeing increased demand for flu shots. Posters touting the benefits of handwashing are dominating schools, workplaces, and public restrooms, and some hospitals are finding themselves at capacity due to increased patient volume.

As of January 5, 47 states were reporting widespread geographic flu activity, and 2 were reporting regional activity.¹ A rise in flu cases led Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston to declare a citywide public health emergency in early January.² Days later, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo followed suit.³

As the flu spreads, brands and retailers have seen an uptick in purchases of flu-related remedies—from facial tissues and chicken soup to antibacterial spray and over-the-counter flu drugs. To help advertisers reach shoppers seeking flu relief, we've analyzed offline and online data points—including point-of-sale data and consumption of social media, videos, music, local web pages, and online magazines—to pinpoint the US cities most interested in the flu right now (i.e., the cities with high saturations of shoppers searching for flu-related topics online and buying related products in stores). By running ads in the top 10 interested cities, advertisers can go beyond the CDC's data, which provides helpful insights at the state level, to focus in on the specific neighborhoods that are putting purchasing power behind the flu this season.

Top Cities Interested in the Flu

1. Huntsville, AL
2. Knoxville, TN
3. Greensboro, NC
4. Greenville, SC
5. Des Moines, IA
6. Rochester, NY
7. Birmingham, AL
8. Boise, ID
9. Augusta, GA
10. Milwaukee, WI

Shopper Profile

Walk down the aisles of any supermarket or drugstore, and you'll see that shoppers purchasing flu-related items in the top cities tend to share certain characteristics. On average, these shoppers are 36 years old. They also:

- Own their homes
- Make between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year
- Have at least a high school education
- Have children

The similarities go well beyond basic demographics, too. A closer examination reveals that those with the flu on their minds search for similar subjects online and make comparable in-store purchases. Check out the infographic at the end of this report to learn more about the shoppers snatching up flu remedies this season.

Inside the Neighborhoods

Hyperlocal digital advertising at its core lets an advertiser target the precise neighborhoods interested in a product. The data and insights an advertiser learns about his or her ideal shoppers in a specific neighborhood are then applied across the United States in order to identify other neighborhoods that will also be receptive to that advertiser's ads. This deep, neighborhood-level targeting approach powers successful national campaigns.

Say, for example, you're an advertiser tasked with promoting a pain reliever marketed under a national brand name. You've had success in the past selling this particular brand of pain reliever to those suffering from the flu, and you think you can take advantage of the recent rise in flu cases to generate more sales. You could run your ads in many markets by targeting at the DMA level, but chances are you'd waste a considerable amount of your ad spend on neighborhoods that haven't seen many flu cases recently.

To maximize your spend, you might instead target your ads to the top cities searching for and buying flu remedies, which would allow you to more efficiently reach shoppers poised to buy your product. And your targeting wouldn't have to stop there. By taking a hyperlocal approach, you could deliver ads that clearly speak to a neighborhood's specific needs and interests.

Take, for example, the top city on our list: Huntsville, Alabama. By layering additional levels of data onto our initial profile of the city, we were able to determine that although neighborhoods in the city generally have an elevated interest in the flu, certain neighborhoods buy generic flu remedies while others opt for brand-name products:

Huntsville Neighborhoods Purchasing Generic Flu Remedies

- Darwin Downs
- Nolan Hills
- Rainbow

Huntsville Neighborhoods Purchasing Brand-Name Flu Remedies

- West Huntsville
- Windsor Manor

How does the data above help you with your ads for a brand-name pain reliever? Now that you know which neighborhoods choose brand-name products, you could choose to run ads in only those neighborhoods. Or, you could run enticing promotions with deeper discounts in an effort to get shoppers in the “generic” neighborhoods to switch to your brand-name product. In either case, you will drive higher returns by taking a hyperlocal approach.

What This Means for Advertisers

Each year, the flu season starts, peaks, and ends. Flu activity is heightened across nearly every state in the nation right now, making this a great time for advertisers to promote products that appeal to flu-ridden and flu-fearing shoppers. By reaching those with the most interest in the flu, you can get more from your digital ad campaigns this season.

MaxPoint in Action

Using the data from this Interest Index, we ran several digital advertising campaigns, including the following:

Flu Vaccine – A global pharmaceutical company with a diverse health care portfolio—including pharmaceuticals, eye care products, and vaccines—wanted to drive adults over 65 years of age to select pharmacy locations to receive flu shots. Using MaxPoint’s hyperlocal targeting, the company achieved 164% lift in awareness of its flu vaccine at participating pharmacies.

Brand-Name Pain Reliever – A manufacturer of analgesics wanted to increase brand awareness and drive sales of its products. By running digital ads with MaxPoint, the manufacturer achieved 3% sales lift in mass merchandise stores.

1. CDC, *FluView* surveillance report, January 5, 2013.
2. www.cityofboston.gov
3. *The Huffington Post*, January 2, 2013.

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Interest in the Flu Spreads

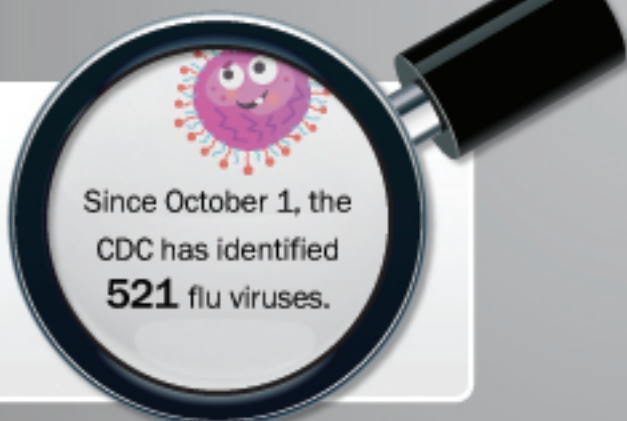
2012–2013 Flu Season

STATES



As of January 5, **47 states** were reporting widespread geographic flu activity, and 2 states were reporting regional activity.

CDC, FluView surveillance report, January 5, 2013



CDC, FluView surveillance report, January 5, 2013

In response to the increase in flu cases, Mayor Thomas M. Menino declared a public health emergency in Boston on January 9.

www.cityofboston.gov

As of January 4, approximately **128.1 million doses** of seasonal flu vaccine have been distributed in the United States.

www.cdc.gov

128.1 M
FLU VACCINES

Top Cities Interested in the Flu



Shopper Profile

Typical shopper interested in the flu:

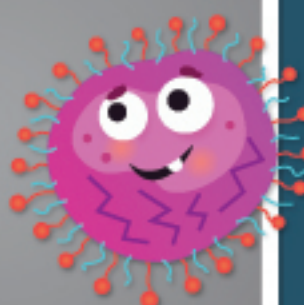
- ☒ Age: 36
- ☒ Income: \$50,000–\$60,000
- ☒ Education: High school
- ☒ Homeowner
- ☒ High presence of children



Online Topics

What they're looking for online:

flu
pneumonia
body aches
Tamiflu®
flu shot
flu vaccine
flu remedies
urgent care centers



POS Data

What's in their basket:

facial tissues
antibacterial home spray
hand sanitizer
aspirin
chicken soup
orange juice
Airborne®
vitamin C
Theraflu®
Zicam®
Vicks® DayQuil® Cold & Flu
Tylenol® Cold & Flu Severe
digital thermometers
cough drops

Data from 70,000 stores nationwide



Huntsville Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods buying:

Generic Remedies

- € Darwin Downs
- € Nolan Hills
- € Rainbow

Brand-Name Remedies

- \$ West Huntsville
- \$ Windsor Manor



Hyperlocal Targeting

MAXPOINT