RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT
Week 51: Dec 14-Dec 20, 2025

Cook County Dept. of Public Health | BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Purpose: This report describes current trends in suburban Cook County for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV. Selected graphics are presented on pages 2-4. For complete surveillance data on these pathogens, please visit our respiratory dashboard.

Key Points:

COVID-19, Influenza, RSV

- Flu activity has jumped to high this past week, and continues to increase. Activity levels for COVID-19 and RSV are low but increasing.
- Emergency room visits associated with flu have nearly tripled in the past week. In particular, the percent of ED visits for flu in children is twice as high as this time last year.
- ED visits for COVID-19 have also picked up, with the percent of ED visits in children under 5 approaching the peak values seen last year.
- Similarly, hospital admissions associated with flu have more than doubled in the past week, with 15 ICU admissions for the week. Admissions associated with COVID-19 continue to increase, though less dramatically than for flu.
- RSV associated ED visits are climbing for children under 5. However, indicators are generally lower for RSV at this time than for the previous season.
- Wastewater detections for all three pathogens are trending up, but influenza flu A and SARS-CoV-2 have the most dramatic increases.

Is anything else going around?

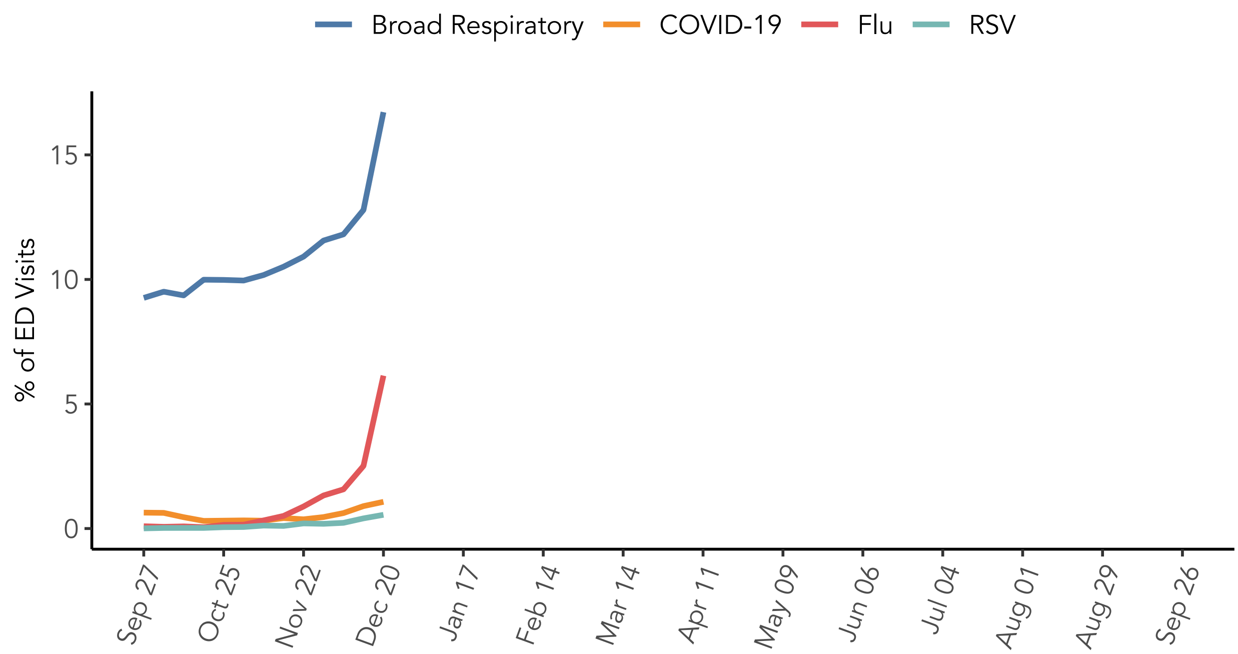
- Test positivity of human metapneumovirus (HMPV) has begun to trend up. This virus typically causes mild illness with cold symptoms such as cough, fever, and congestion.
- Test positivity for common human coronaviruses is starting to trend up. *These viruses are not the same as the virus that causes COVID-19.* They typically cause mild illness, but sometimes can lead to lower respiratory tract illness like pneumonia or bronchitis.

Recommendations

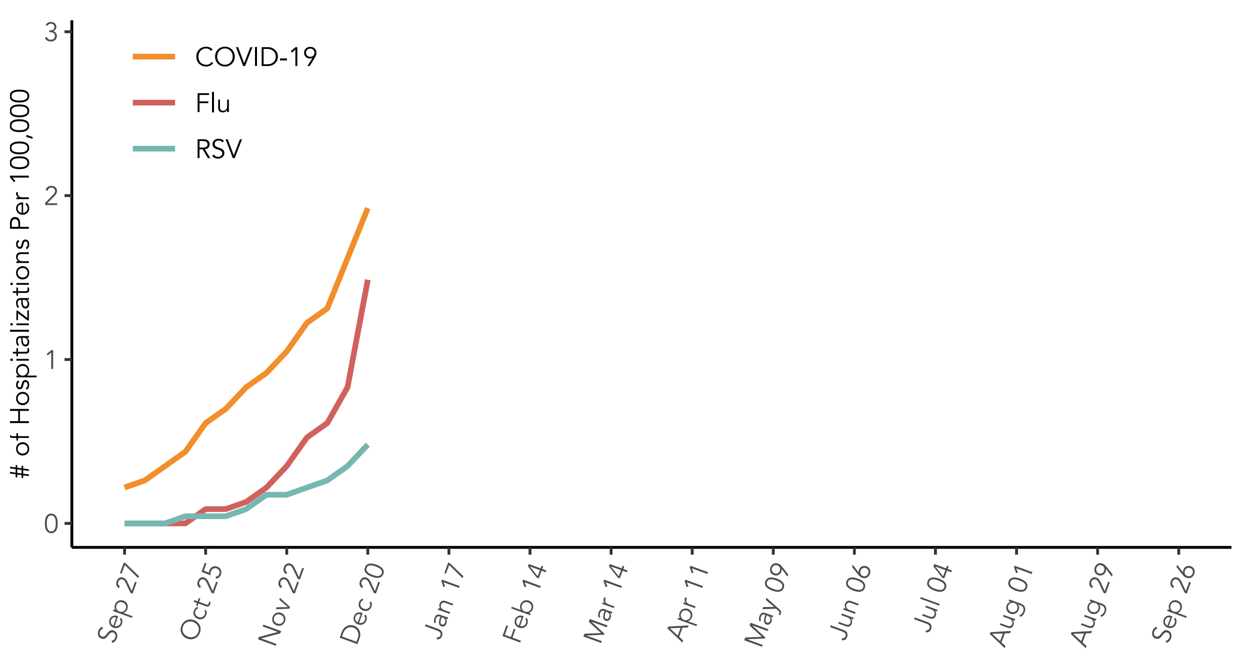
- CDC's core recommendations for *individuals* at this time include masking in certain settings, on top of staying up to date with all recommended respiratory virus vaccines, practicing good respiratory hygiene (covering your cough, washing your hands), taking steps for cleaner air, and using precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses when you are sick. This means staying home until you've been fever-free for 24 hours and your symptoms are getting better. CDC also recommends individuals are familiar with treatment options for flu and COVID-19, especially if you are at high risk for severe outcomes.
- CDC's core recommendations for *organizations* at this activity level include additional prevention strategies such as facility-wide masking and limiting visitors in addition to supporting vaccination efforts, encouraging good respiratory hygiene with posters and adequate hand-washing supplies, taking steps for cleaner air, and supporting time off for individuals to stay home when sick or to seek treatment.
- Respiratory seasonal activity has gained serious momentem, but it's not too late to get vaccinated. In addition, now is the time to focus on the "three C's" of respiratory prevention: Clean (wash your hands), Cover (cover your cough), and Contain (stay home when sick).

We would like to thank all of our surveillance partners for their help in collecting this information! Additional details on our methods can be found here.

Emergency Rooms Visits by Respiratory Diagnosis

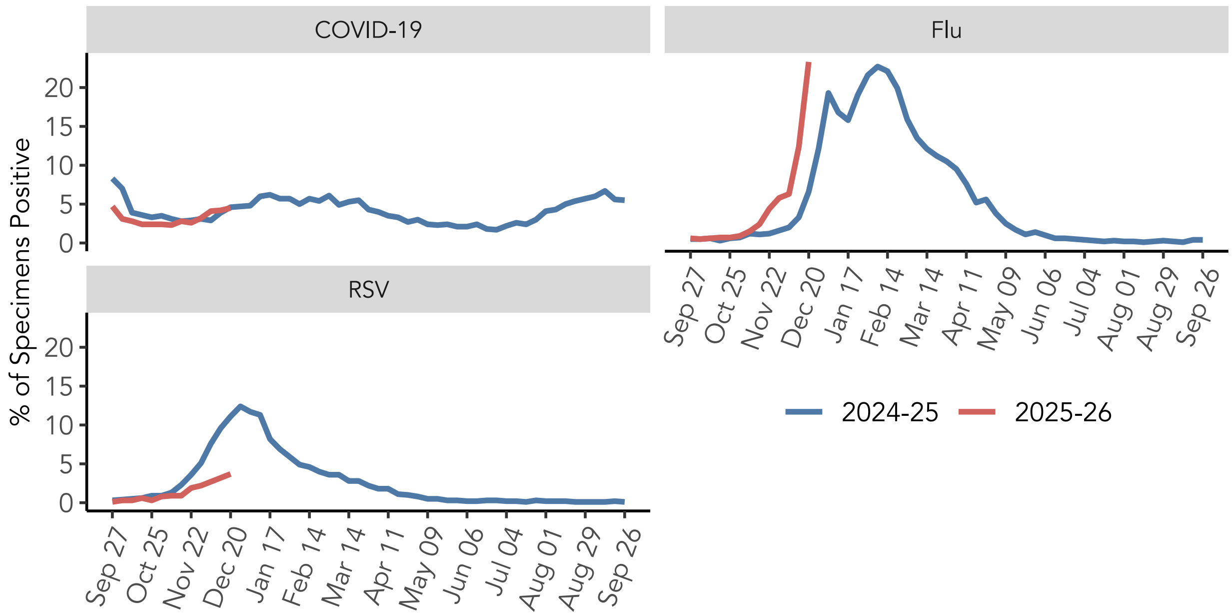


Cumulative ICU Admission Rate for Reportable Respiratory Viruses



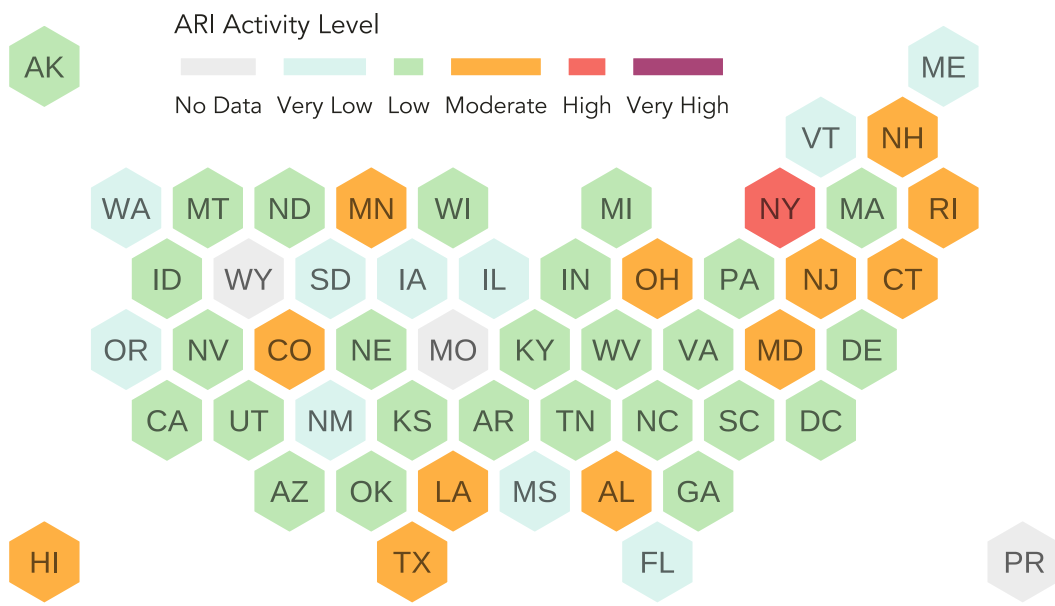
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

Laboratories contributing data differ by pathogen. Lab data may not be comparable between viruses. Graphics are better used to look at trajectory for a given virus over time.

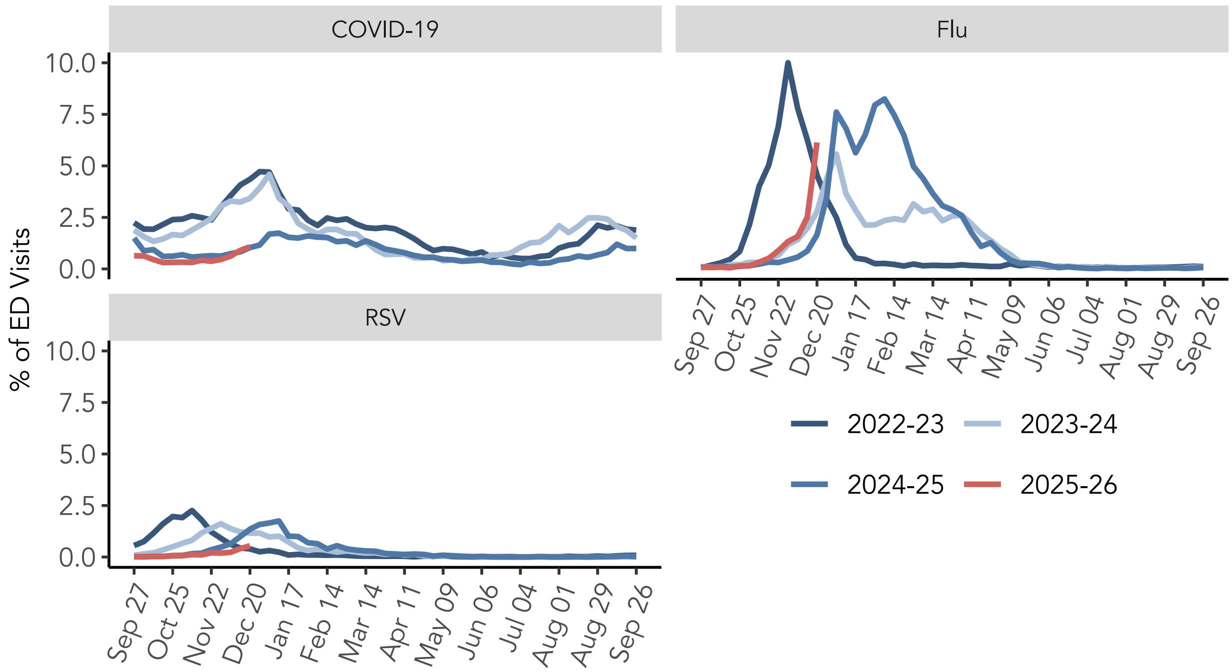


CDC Acute Respiratory Illness Activity Levels by State

Data for the week ending 2025-12-13, most recent CDC data available



Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis