RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Week 52: Dec 21-Dec 27, 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 been elevated from high to very high and continues to increase. Activity level for RSV has elevated from low to moderate and is increasing. COVID-19 activity level remains low but is still increasing.
- The percent of emergency room visits associated with flu is continuing to increase and has surpassed peak values seen last year.
- The percent of emergency room visits for COVID-19 had a large increase this week and has also surpassed peak values seen last year; however, it remains below peak values seen in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 respiratory seasons.
- Hospital admissions associated with flu and COVID-19 are dramatically increasing. ICU admissions for flu nearly doubled this week.
- This week saw 12 RSV ICU admissions, which was more than we have seen from all other weeks this season combined, bringing the total to 23. However, indicators are generally lower for RSV at this time than for the previous season.
- Of specimens positive for flu at our sentinel laboratories, 98% have been flu A. Of the flu A specimens with sub-type available, 87% have been H3N2.
- 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) is continuing 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 also elevated. *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.

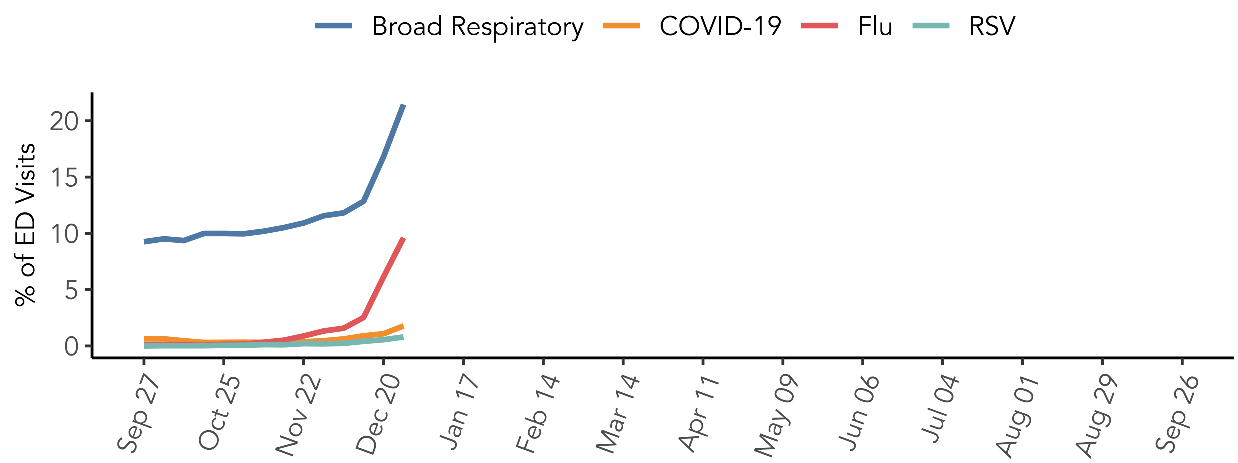
Recommendations

- CDC's core recommendations for *individuals* include 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* include supporting vaccination efforts (like hosting a clinic or providing time off for vaccination and recovery), 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.
- For individuals who wish to take extra steps to protect themselves from respiratory illness, now is a good time to implement additional precautions, such as wearing a mask when in public indoors, avoiding crowded areas when possible, and making a plan for getting tested or seeking healthcare quickly

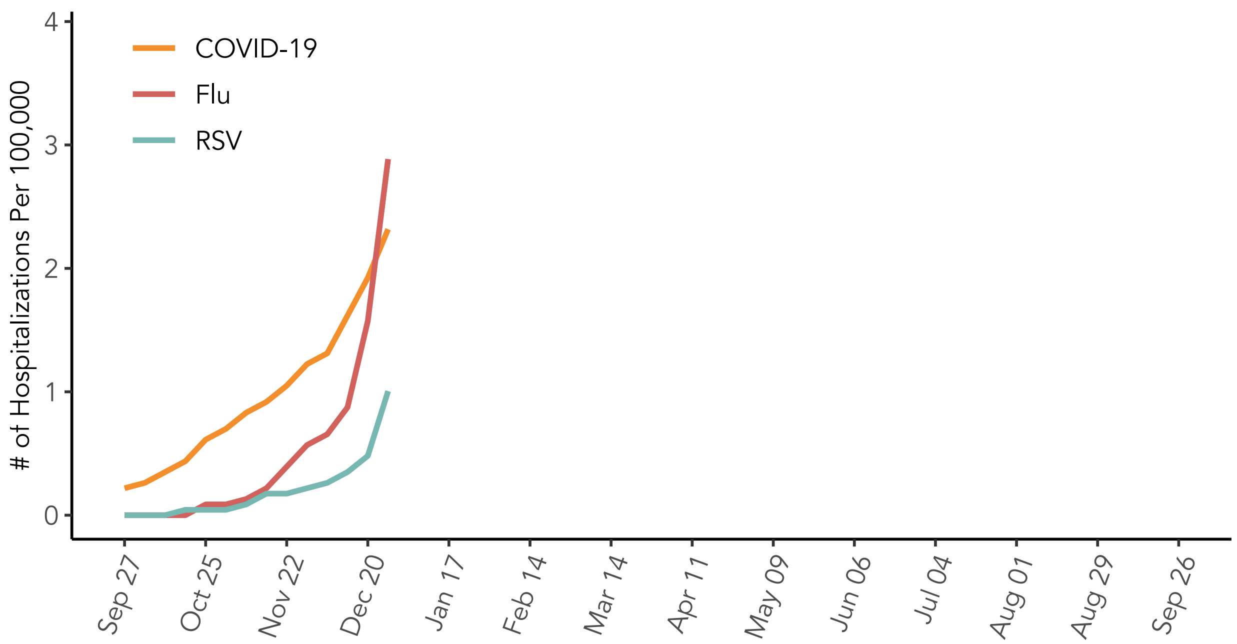
if you become sick. It's also not too late to get vaccinated. Healthcare facilities should review IDPH's Health Alert regarding Enhanced Precautions during times of increased respiratory illness.

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

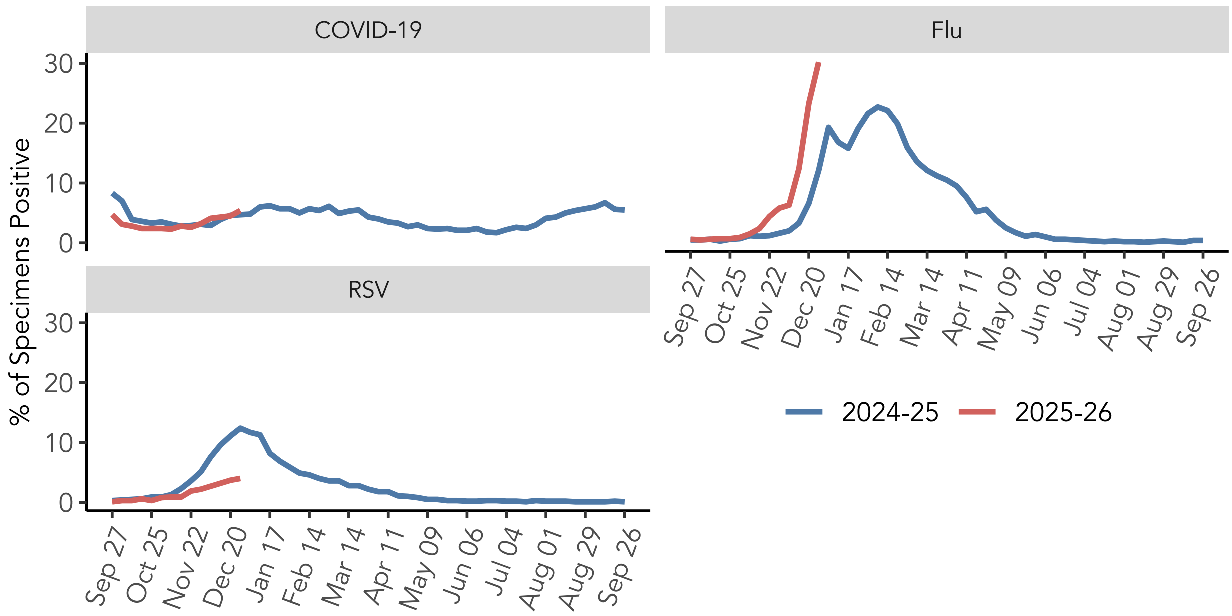


Cumulative ICU Admission Rate for Reportable Respiratory Viruses



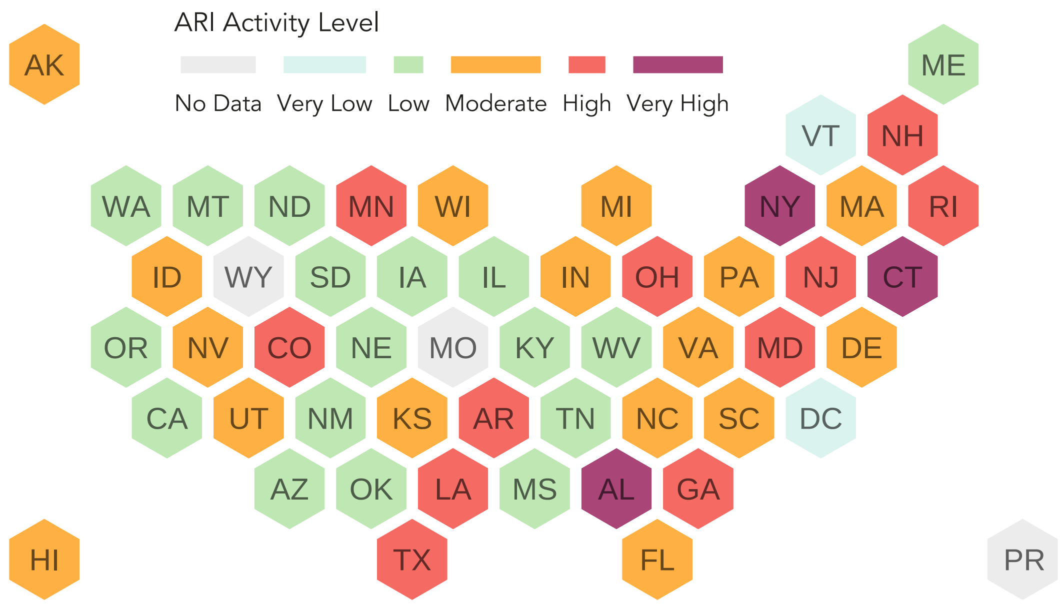
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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.

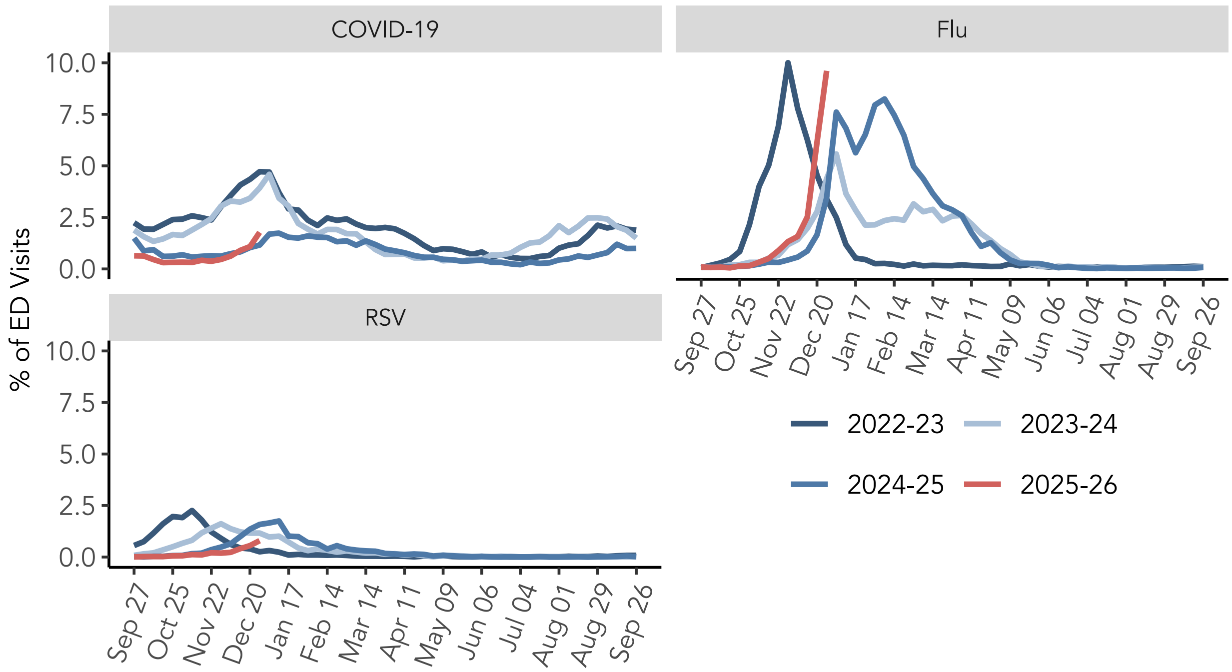


CDC Acute Respiratory Illness Activity Levels by State

Data for the week ending 2025-12-20, most recent CDC data available



Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis