

RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health

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Week 53: Dec 28, 2025-Jan 03, 2026

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 changed from very high to high. COVID-19 activity has elevated from low to moderate and continues to increase, and RSV activity remains moderate.
- The percent of emergency rooms visits for influenza, as well as the percent of lab specimens testing positive for influenza, decreased from last week; however, values remain high and other surveillance indicators are trending up. It is too soon to say if the season has peaked.
- This week we saw the first pediatric flu death of the season.
- The percentage of emergency room visits for COVID-19 continues to increase beyond last year's peak. The percent of visits is currently increasing the fastest among children under 5.
- Hospital admissions associated with flu, COVID-19, and RSV are still increasing.
- Wastewater detections for all three pathogens are trending up. Current viral concentrations for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) and influenza are similar to the peak values seen last year.

Is anything else going around?

- 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

- Some steps for protection from respiratory viruses should be practiced year-round, regardless of the current activity level. These steps include staying up to date with all recommended respiratory [vaccines](#), practicing good respiratory hygiene (covering your cough, washing your hands), taking steps for cleaner [air](#), and staying home when you're sick until you've been fever-free for 24 hours and your symptoms are getting better. People who are at [high risk](#) for severe outcomes should be familiar with treatment options for flu and COVID-19. Organizations can support these recommendations by offering time off when employees are sick, hosting vaccination clinics, maintaining adequate ventilation systems, and encouraging good respiratory hygiene with posters and adequate hand-washing supplies. (Note that CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings for reducing transmission of [flu](#), [COVID-19](#), and other [pathogens](#)).
- 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](#).

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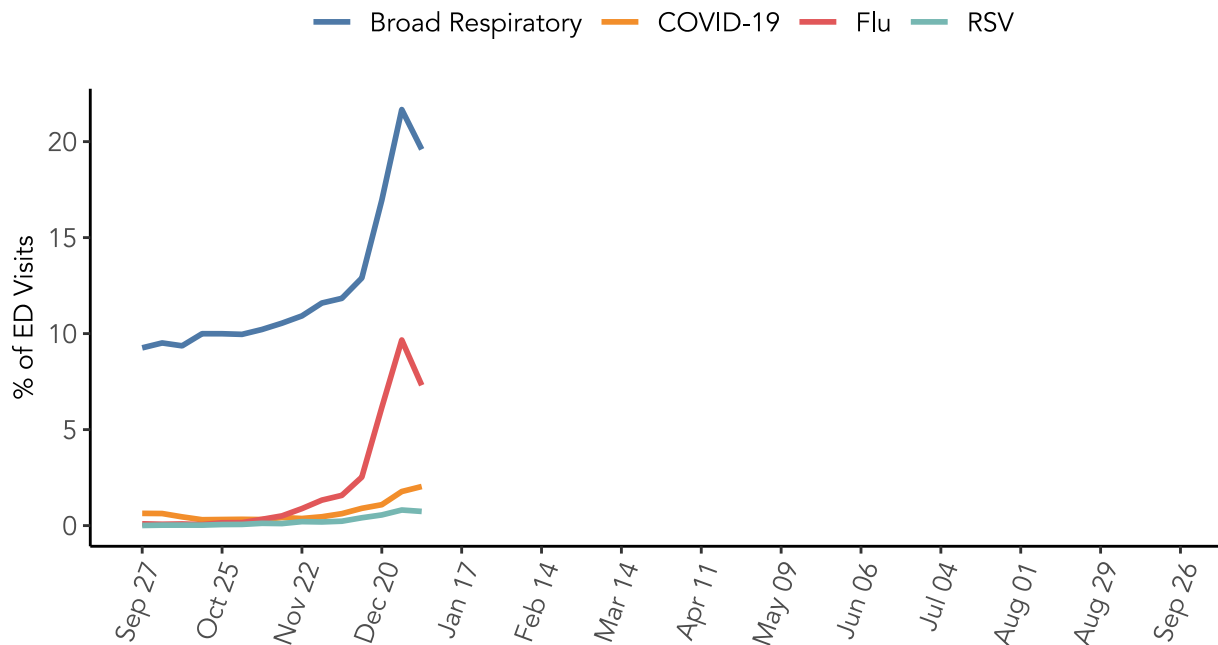


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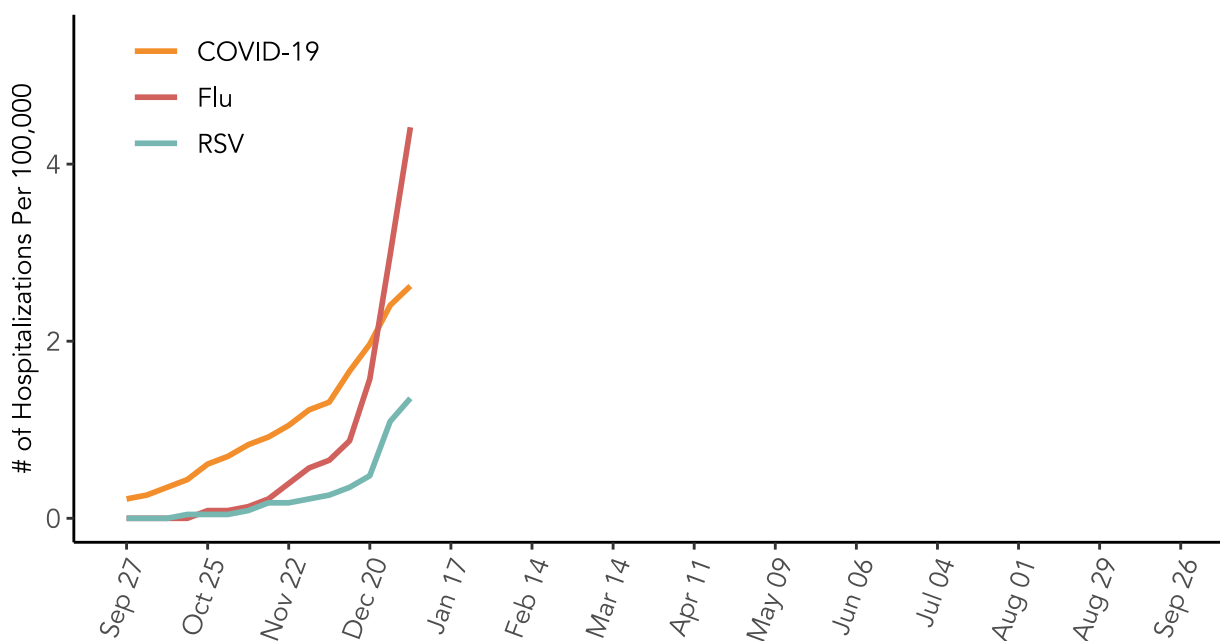
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Emergency Rooms Visits by Respiratory Diagnosis



Cumulative ICU Admission Rate for Reportable Respiratory Viruses



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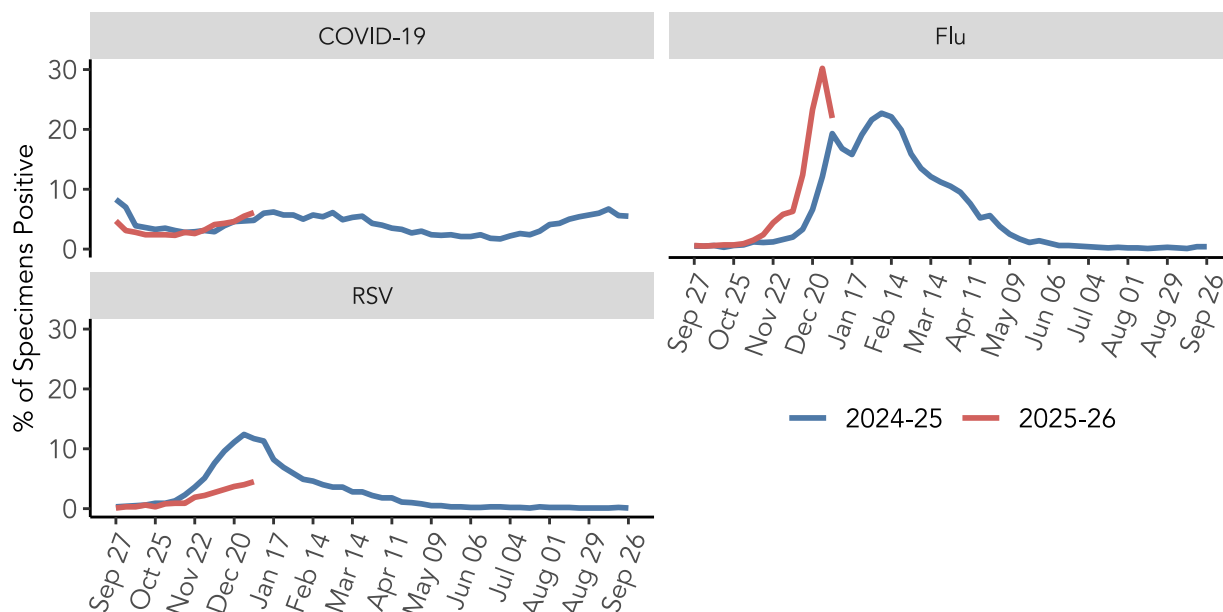
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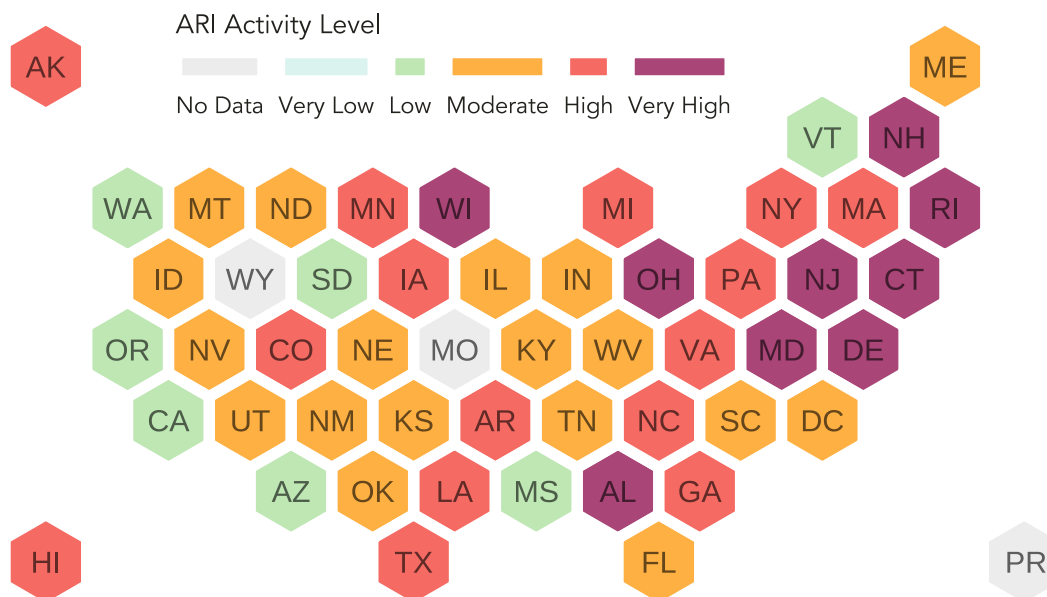
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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 2026-01-03, most recent CDC data available



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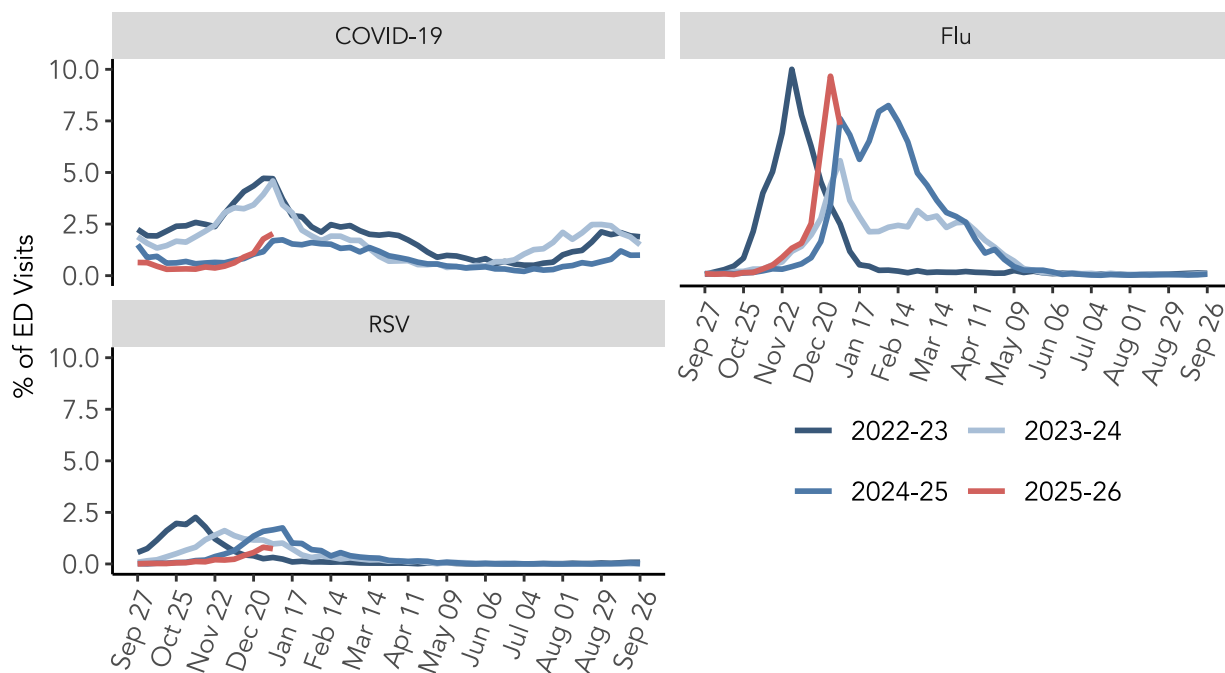


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Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis

