

RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Week 3: Jan 18-Jan 24, 2026



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health

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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 decreased to low and continues to trend downward. COVID-19 activity remains low, while RSV activity has increased to moderate.
- All flu indicators, including outpatient lab percent positivity, wastewater detections, inpatient admission data, and ICU admission data have declined since the season's peak in late December/early January.
- The percentage of RSV-associated emergency department visits has continued to increase over the past two weeks and has reached the highest level this season, though still well below last year's peak.
- The percentage of laboratory specimens testing positive for RSV and COVID-19 increased this week.
- ICU admissions for flu and RSV are declining. COVID-19 ICU admissions this week matched the highest level seen this season but remain below last year's peak.

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.
- Detections of [human metapneumovirus](#) (HMPV) are also elevated above baseline, but below prior seasons' peaks. HMPV causes symptoms similar to other respiratory viruses.

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](#)).
- Respiratory activity decreased this week, but is likely to continue for several more weeks. Many respiratory seasons see a second wave of influenza B in early spring. If you haven't been [vaccinated](#) yet, it's not too late.

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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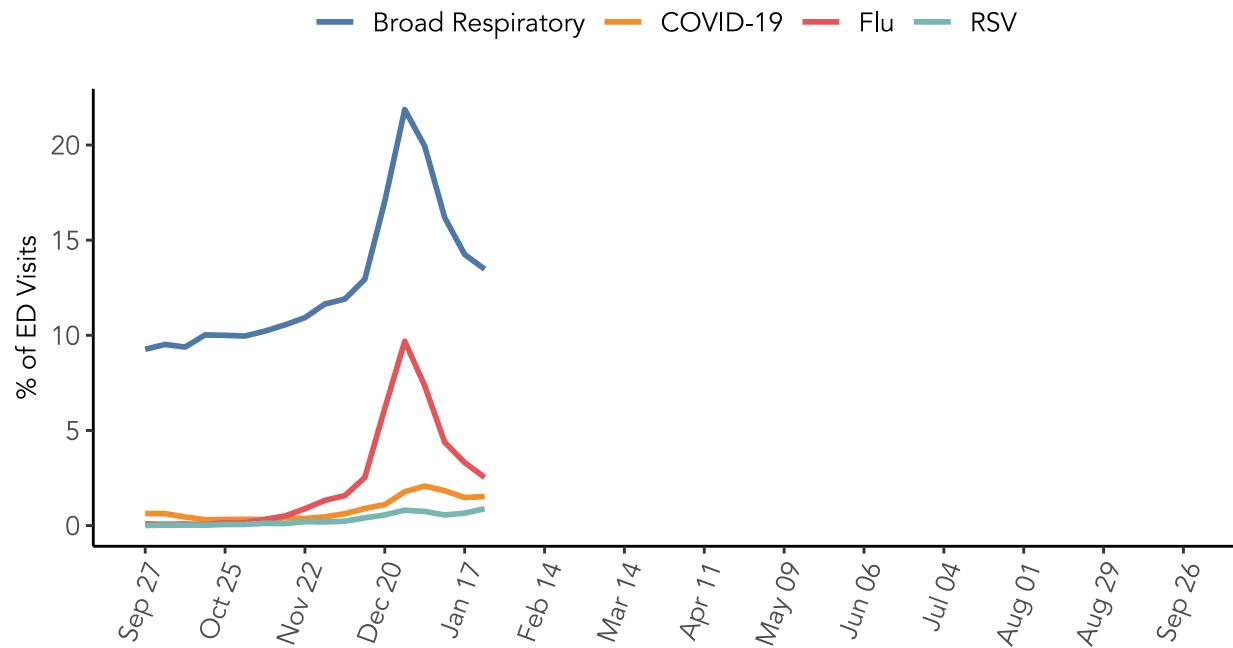
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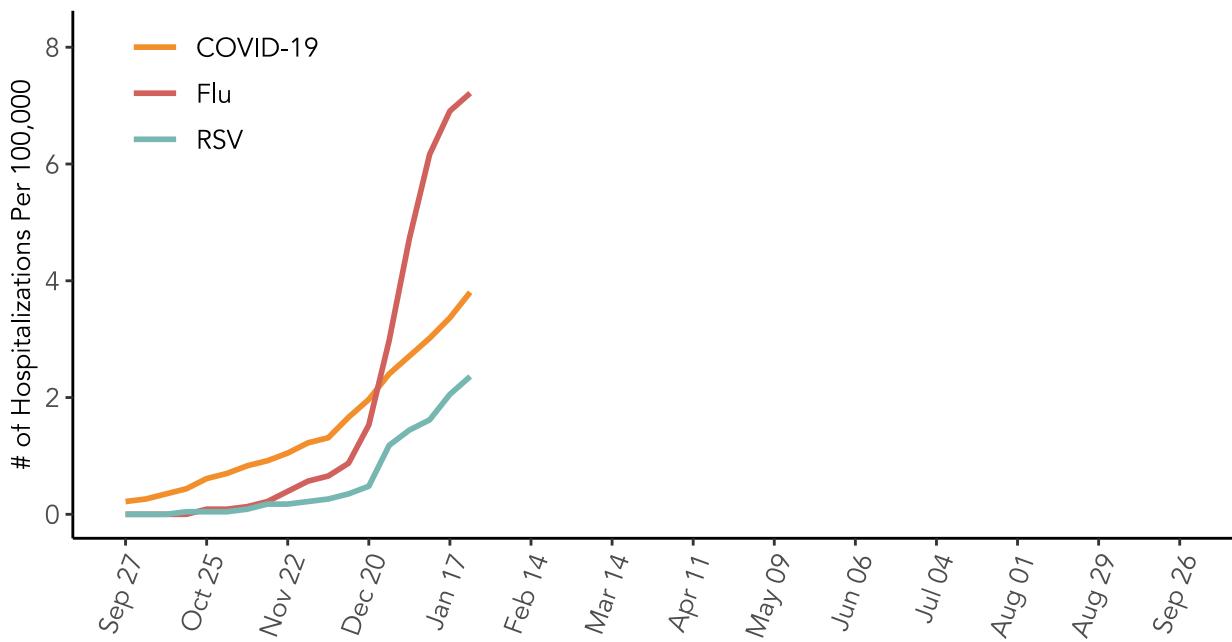
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Emergency Rooms Visits by Respiratory Diagnosis



Cumulative ICU Admission Rate for Reportable Respiratory Viruses



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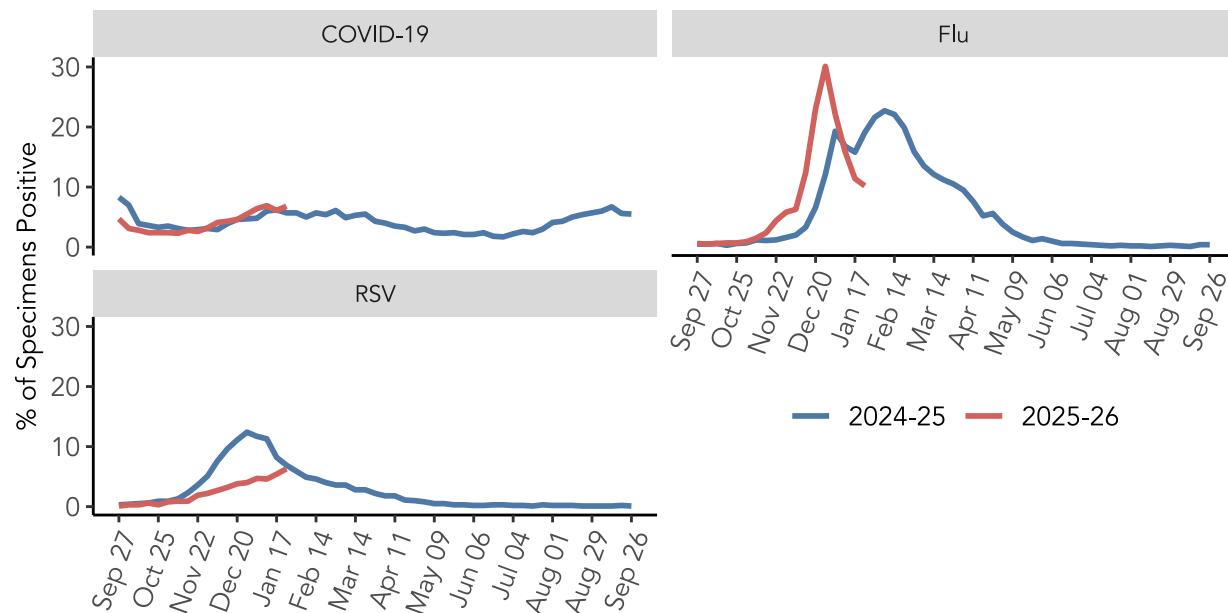
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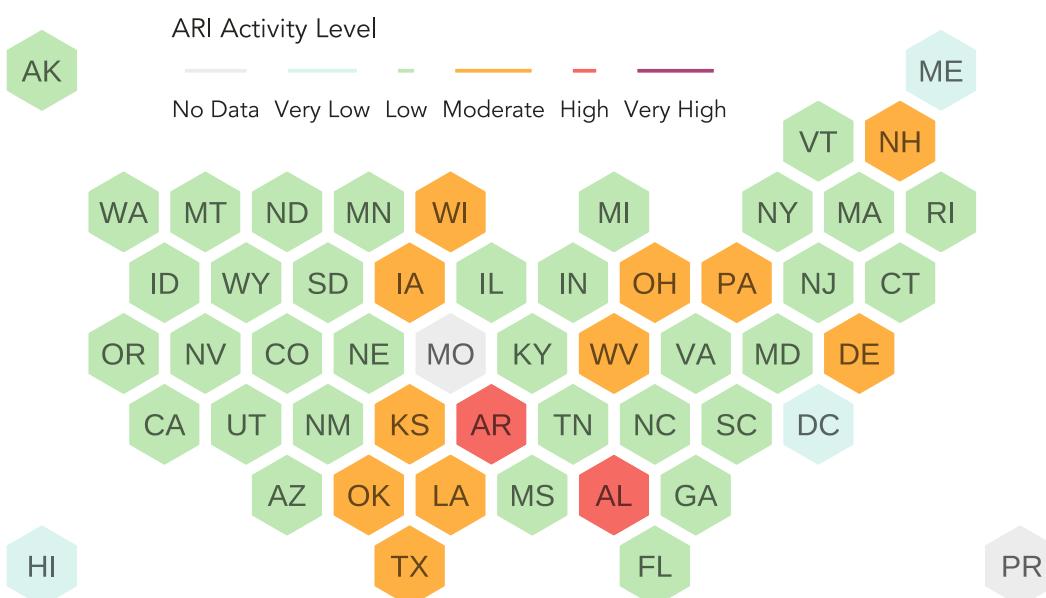
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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 2026-01-24, most recent CDC data available



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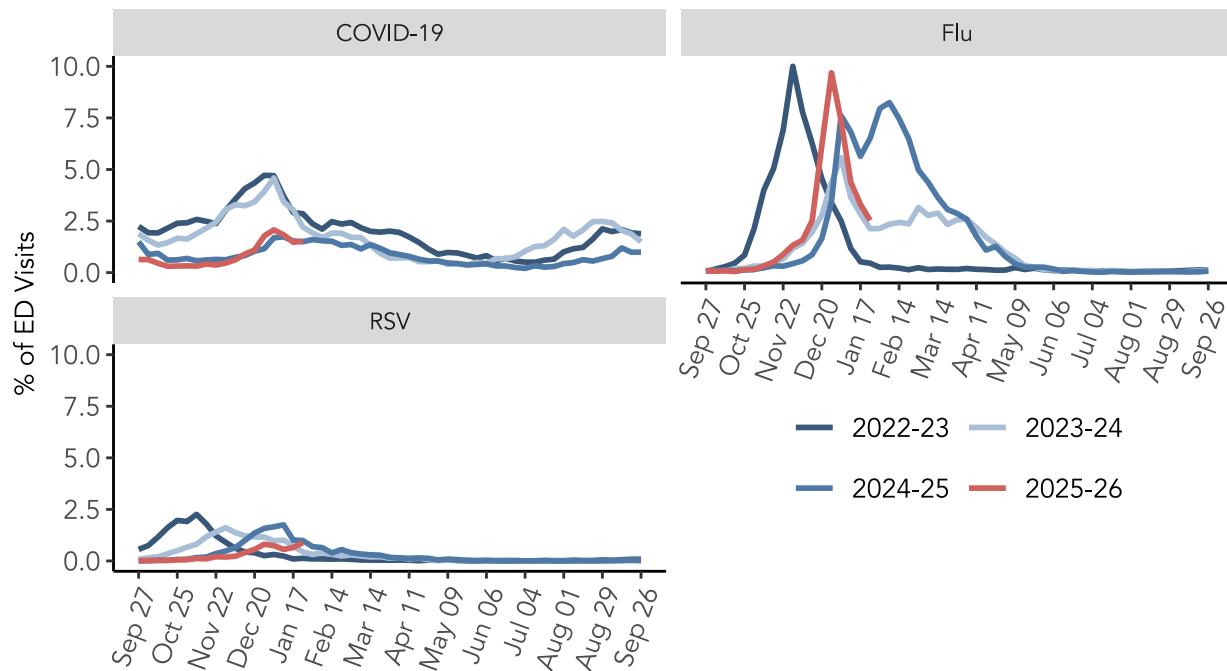
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Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis

