

RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Week 7: Feb 15-Feb 21, 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 and COVID-19 activity remain low, while RSV activity remains moderate.
- The percentage of RSV-associated emergency department visits decreased this week, while hospital admissions continued to increase and are currently at the highest levels observed so far this season. In particular, the admission rate has doubled in children under 5 years over the month of February.
- The percentage of flu-associated emergency department visits and hospital admissions decreased this week.
- RSV test positivity decreased this week, though wastewater detections continue to increase.
- While most flu indicators are trending down, wastewater detections and influenza subtyping show an increase in influenza B. Most respiratory seasons experience a spring wave of influenza B after influenza A activity has peaked.
- ICU admissions continue to be reported weekly for COVID-19, RSV, and flu. For all three reportable pathogens, rates are highest among the non-Hispanic Black population.

Is anything else going around?

- Test positivity for [common human coronaviruses](#) continues to increase. *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](#)).
- Influenza A activity has peaked but other respiratory pathogens, such as RSV, continue to circulate above baseline. Respiratory activity is likely to continue for several more weeks. Residents should continue to practice good respiratory hygiene and 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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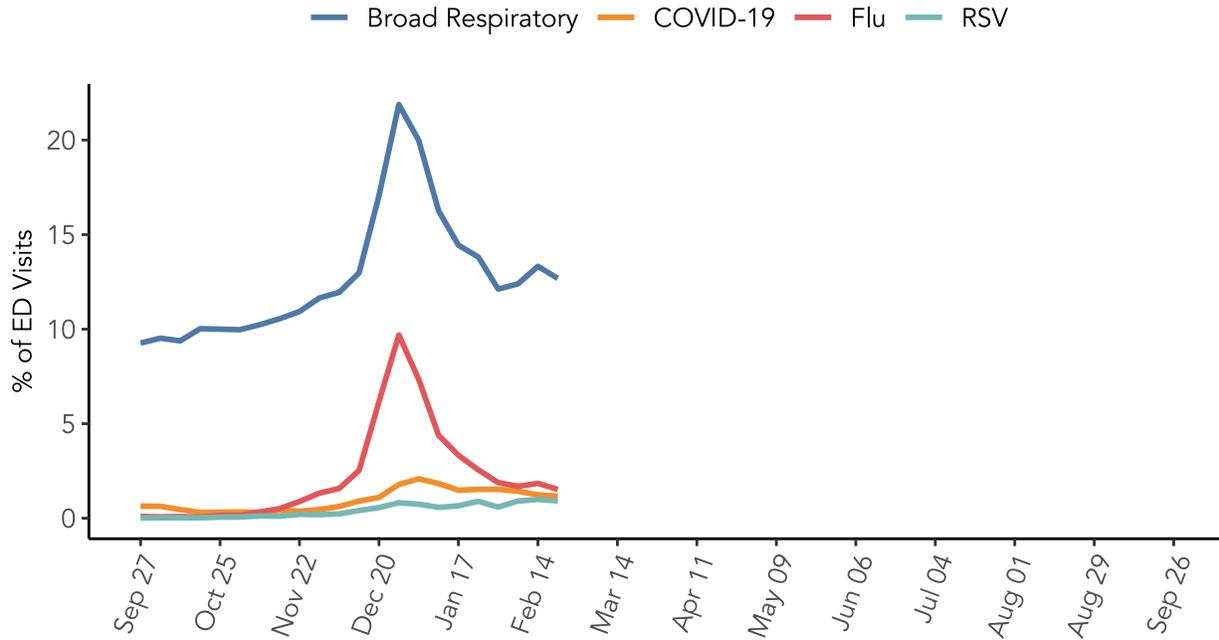
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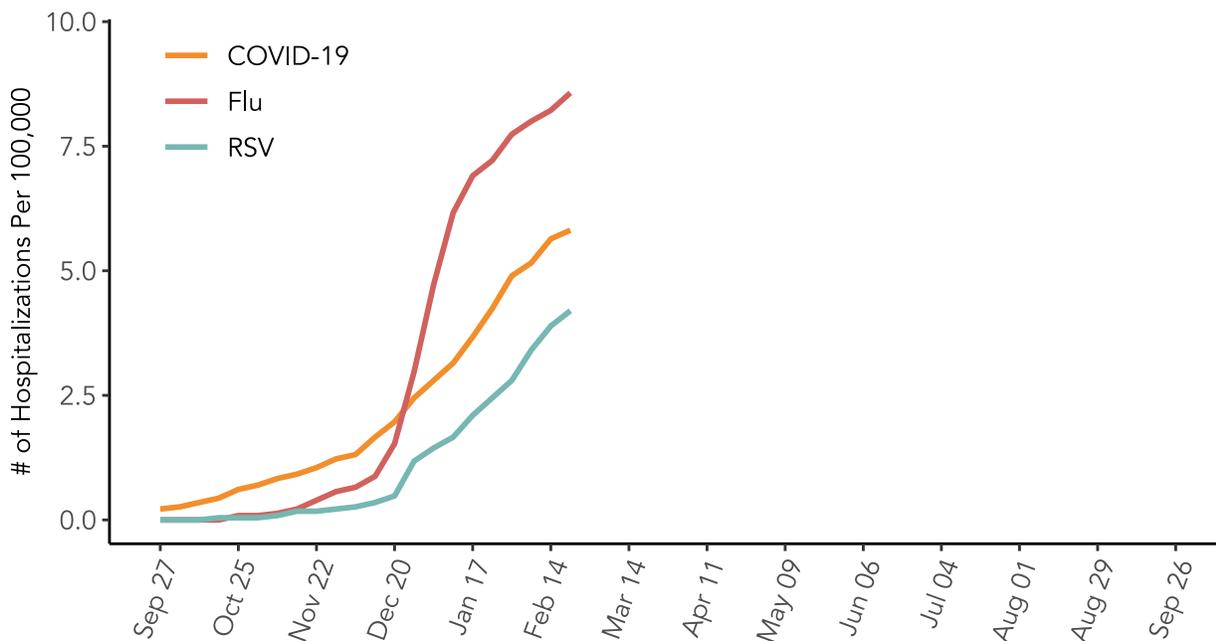
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Emergency Rooms Visits by Respiratory Diagnosis



Cumulative ICU Admission Rate for Reportable Respiratory Viruses



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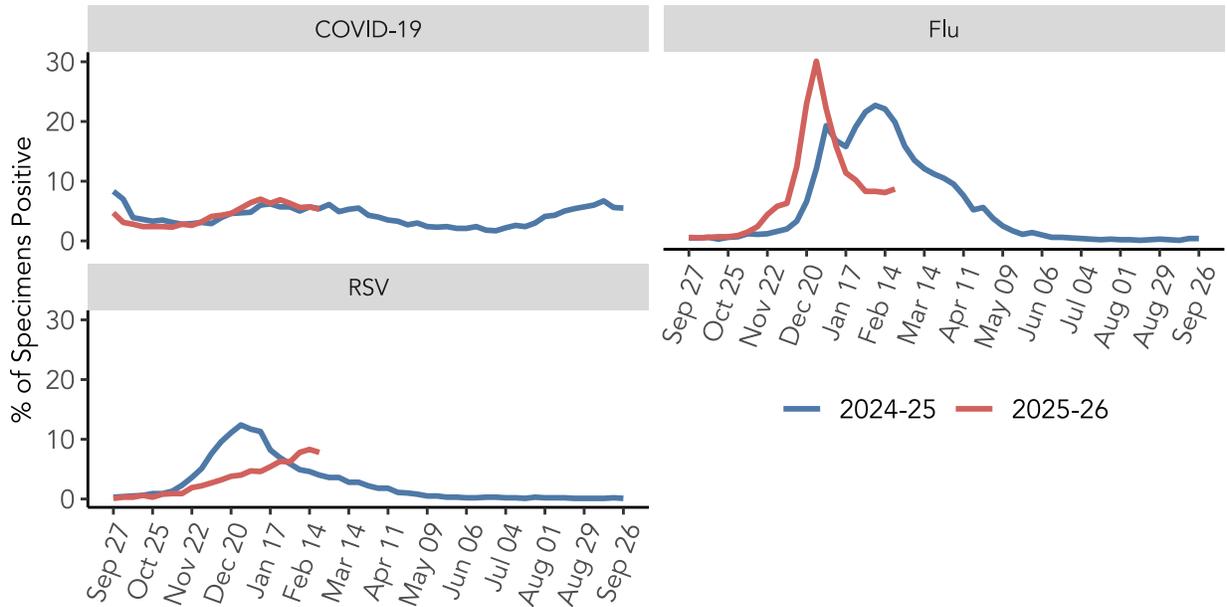


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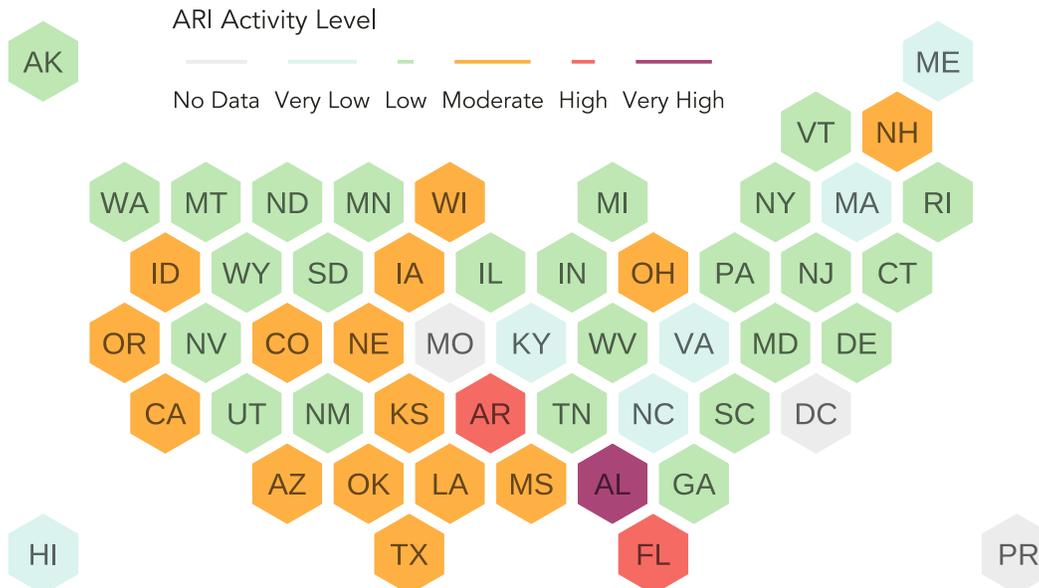
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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 2026-02-14, most recent CDC data available



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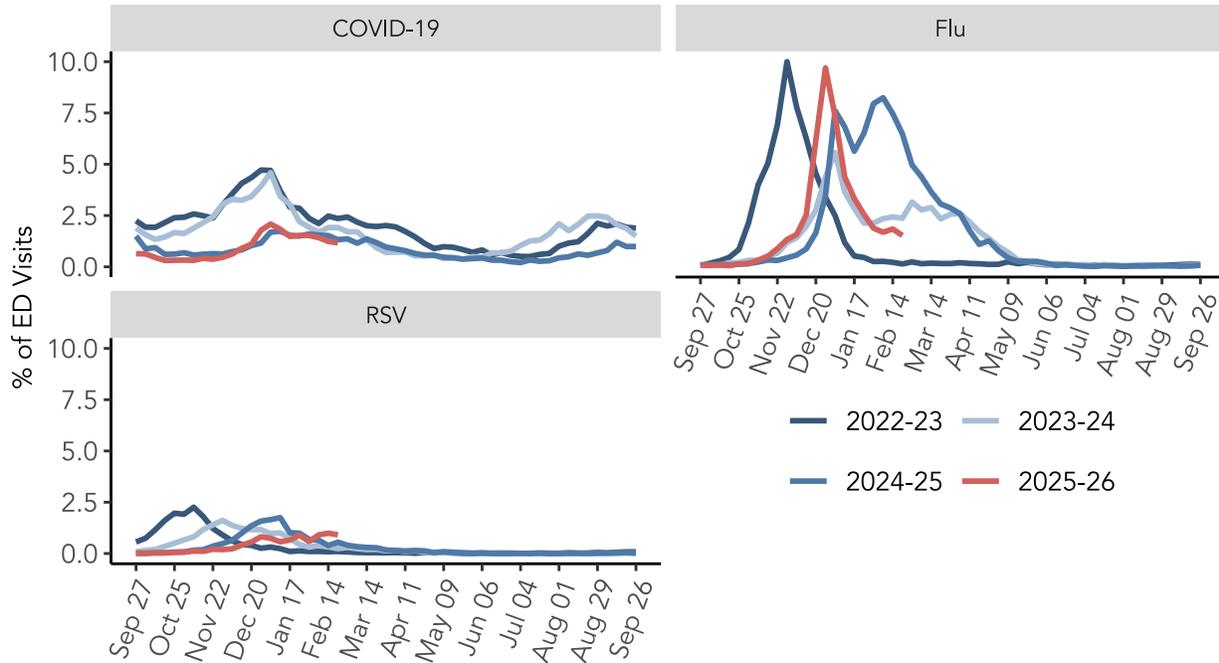
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Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis

