RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Week 38: Sep 20-Sep 26, 2026

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 remains low and COVID-19 and RSV activity remain minimal.
- Percent positivity for flu is continuing to trend up but still remains low.
- There were two ICU admissions for COVID-19 this week. Other COVID-19 indicators remain below last year's levels for this time, though percent positivity and hospitalizations are beginning to trend up.
- Clinical indicators for RSV are at summer baseline levels.

Is anything else going around?

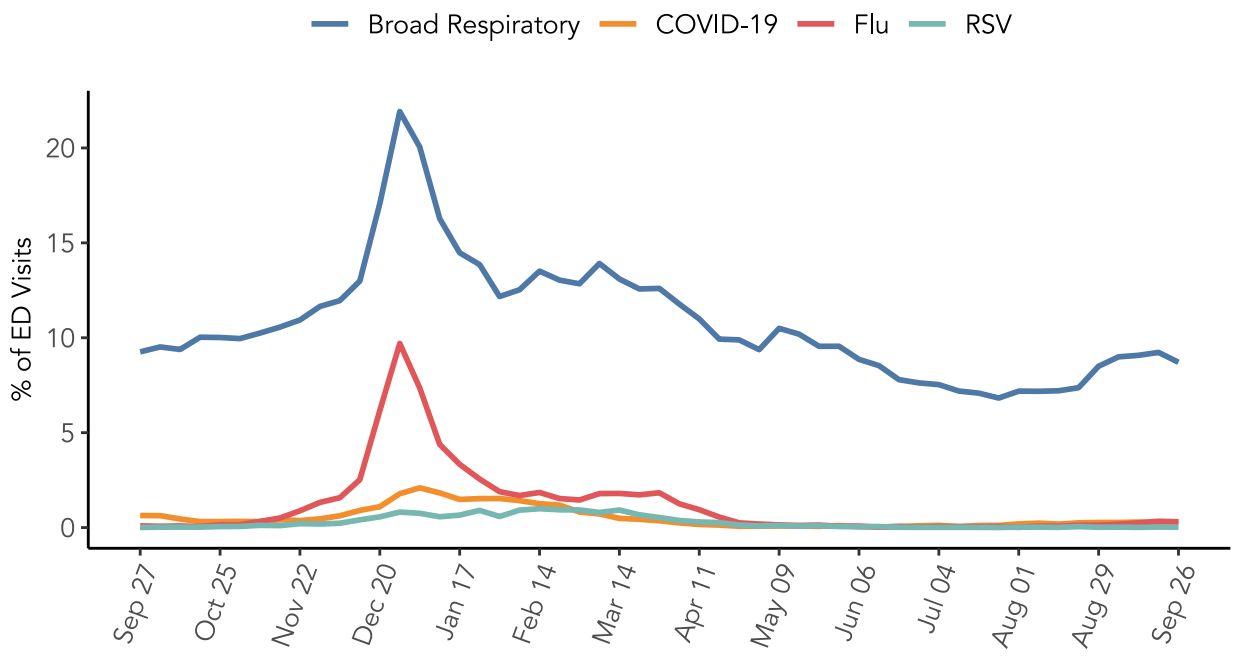
- Parainfluenza viruses have peaked following the summer wave but remain elevated above baseline. These viruses are typically mild; some types are associated with croup in young children.
- Percent positivity for rhinovirus/enterovirus, common cold viruses, continued to be elevated this week. It is typical for these viruses to have a fall wave and a spring wave.

Recommendations

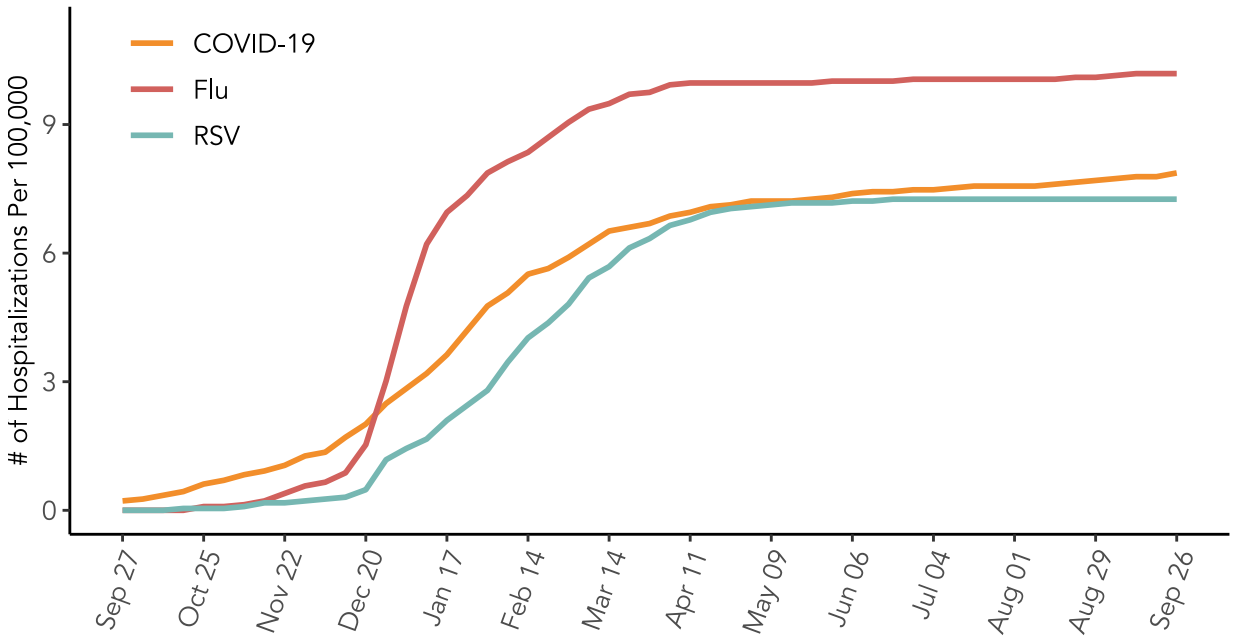
- Some steps for protection from respiratory viruses should be practiced year-round, regardless of the current activity level. These steps include staying up to date with all recommended respiratory vaccines, practicing good respiratory hygiene (covering your cough, washing your hands), taking steps 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).
- We are nearing the start of the respiratory season. Now is a great time to make a plan to get vaccinated. Residents should continue to practice year-round prevention activities, such as washing your hands and staying 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



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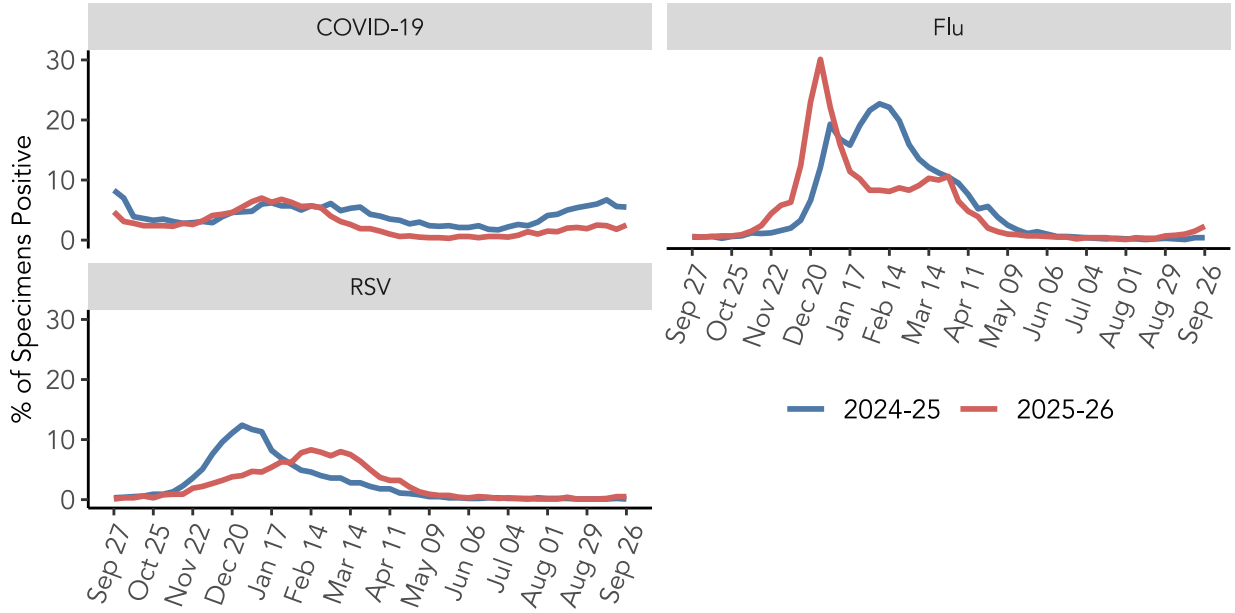
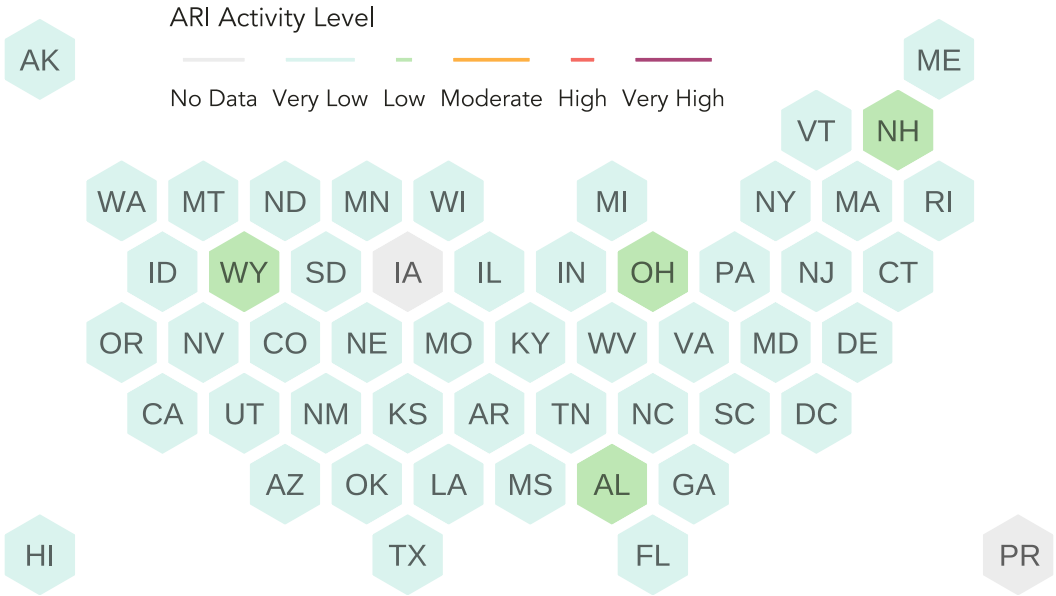
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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.

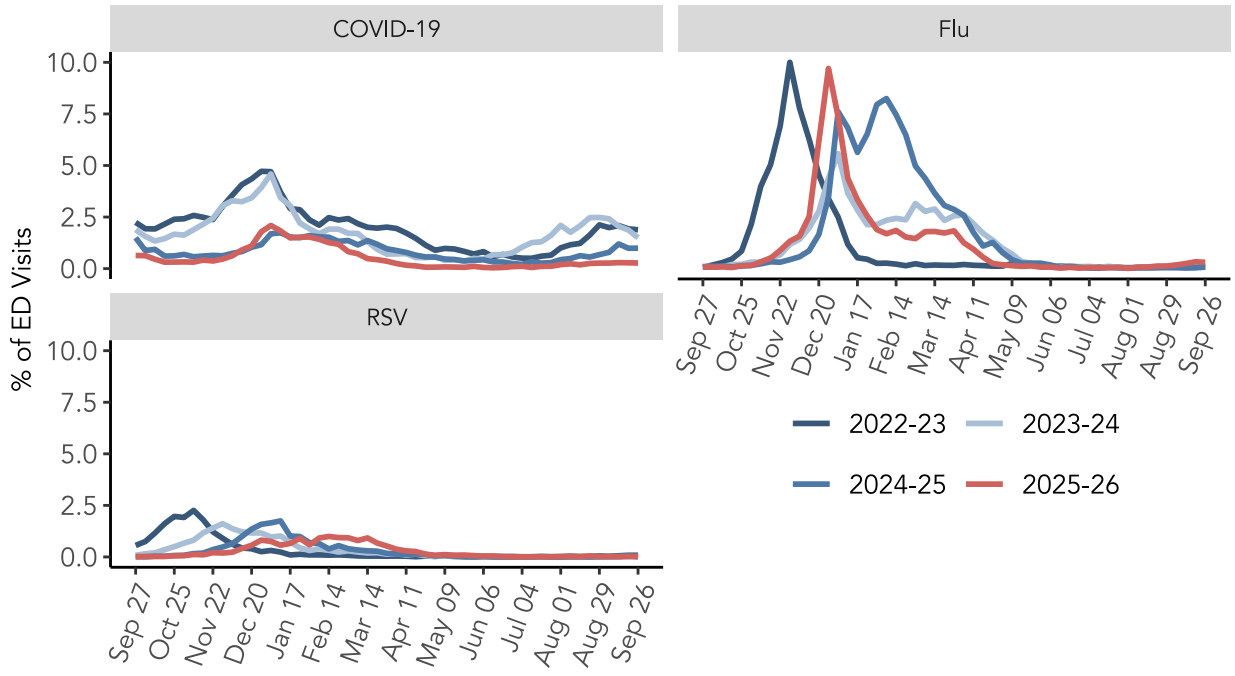
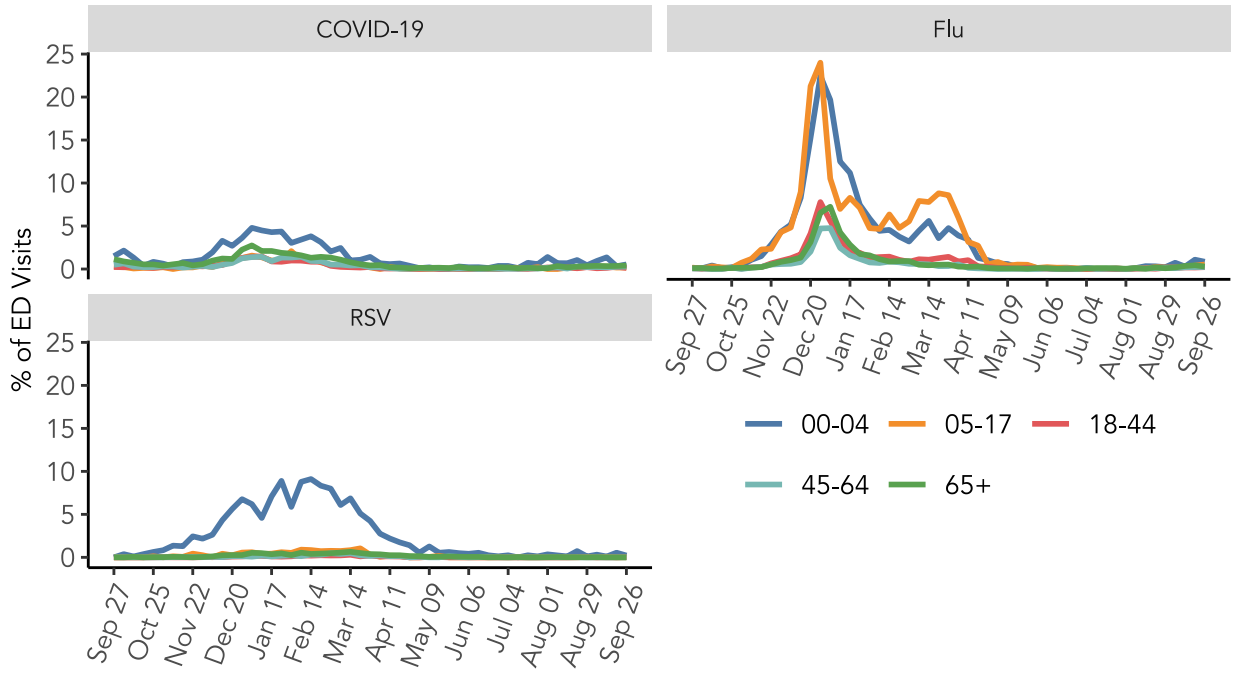


CDC Acute Respiratory Illness Activity Levels by State

Data for the week ending 2026-09-26, most recent CDC data available



Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis