RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURVEILLANCE REPORT
Week 42: Oct 18-Oct 24, 2026

Cook County Department 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 is low and stable. RSV activity is trending up and elevated from minimal to low this week. COVID-19 remains minimal.
- Flu clinical indicators are above where we were last year at this time.
- RSV indicators, including test positivity and ED visits, are increasing. Three ICU admissions have been reported so far this season, compared to one by this time last year. Those aged 0 to 4 years are particularly impacted.
- COVID-19 clinical indicators remain below last year's levels for this time.

Is anything else going around?

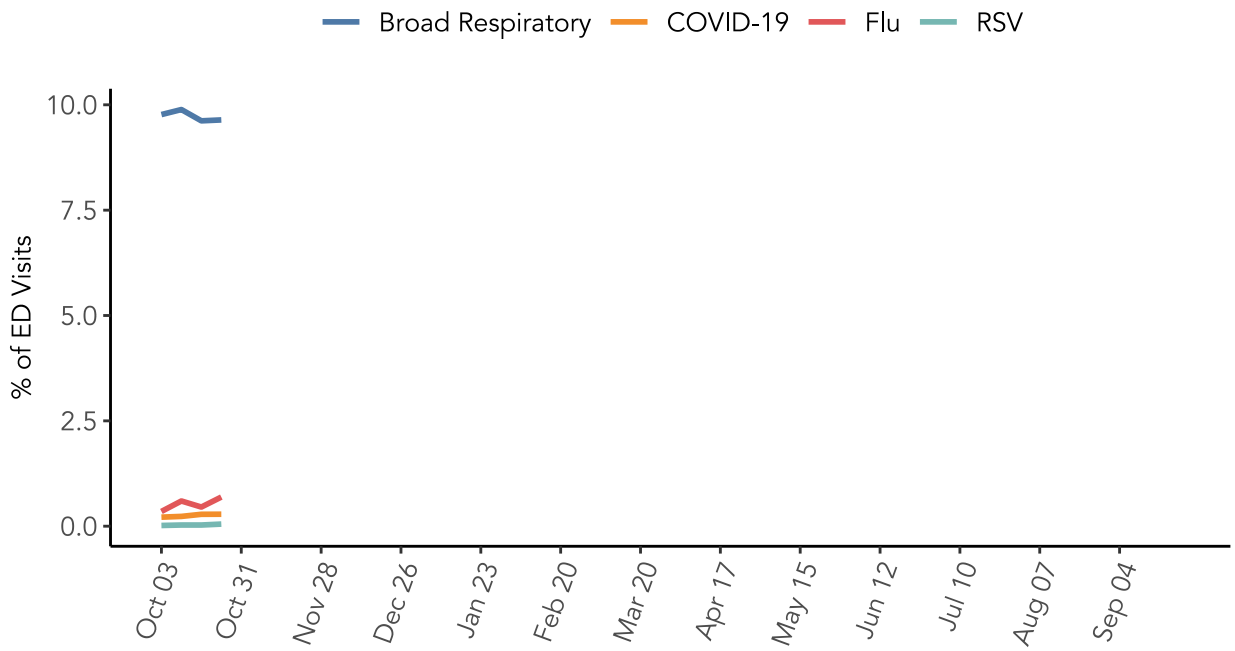
- Parainfluenza viruses have peaked following the summer wave but remain elevated above baseline. These viruses are typically mild; some types are associated with croup in young children.
- Percent positivity for rhinovirus/enterovirus, common cold viruses, continued to be elevated this week. It is typical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

Recommendations

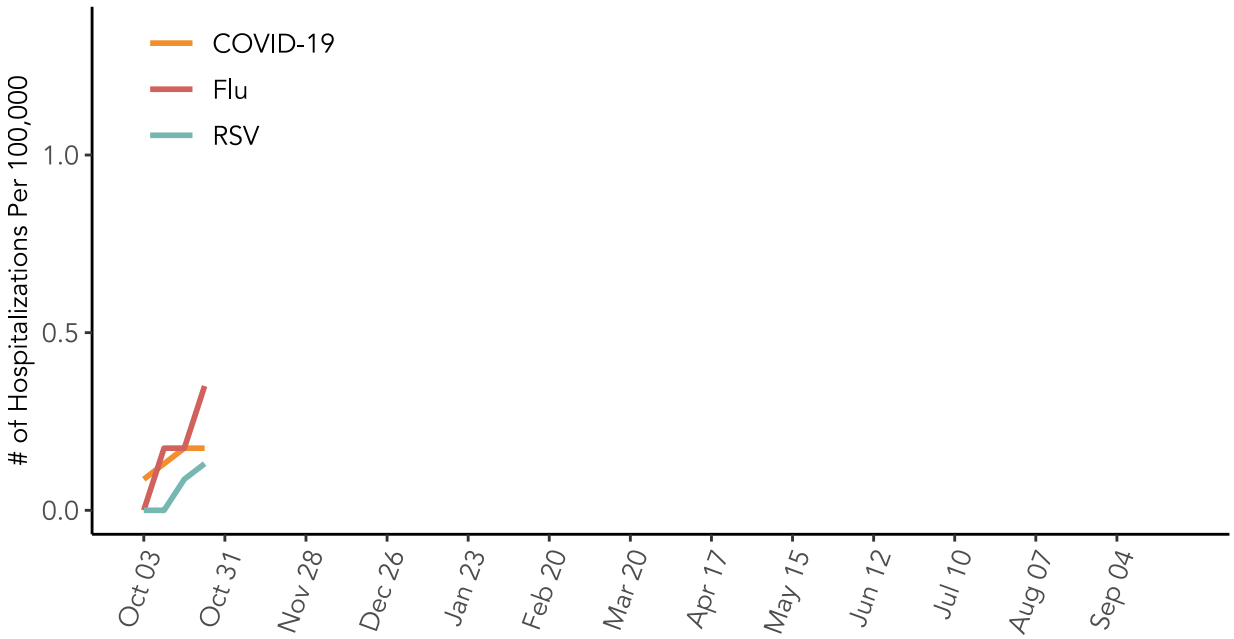
- Some steps for protection from respiratory viruses should be practiced year-round, regardless of the current activity level. These steps include staying up to date with all recommended respiratory vaccines, practicing good respiratory hygiene (covering your cough, washing your hands), taking steps 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).
- The respiratory season has begun. 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

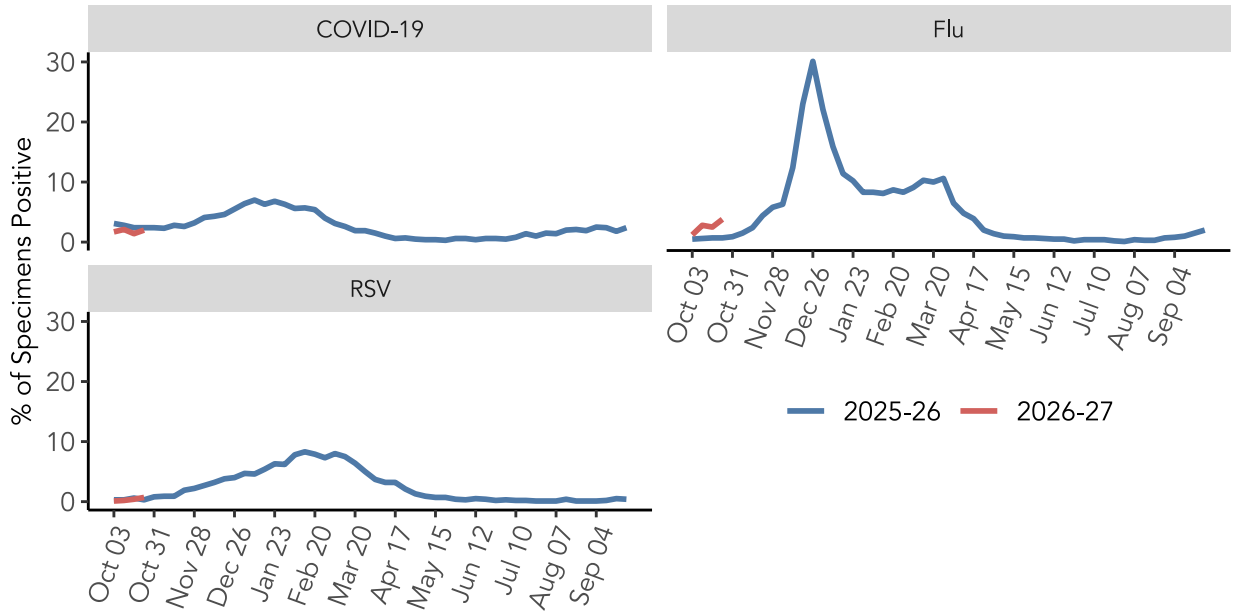


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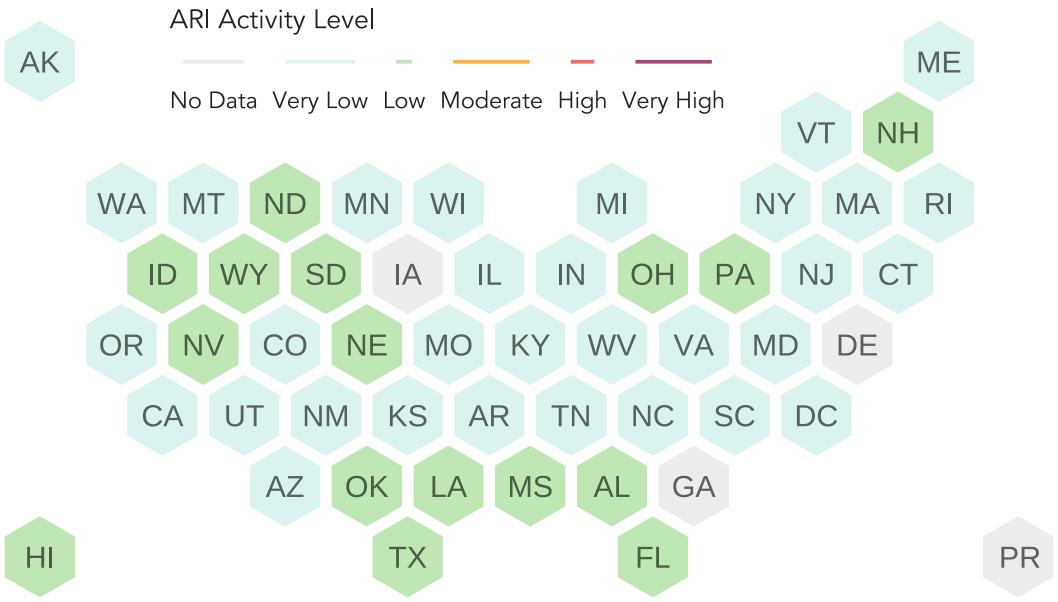
Percent Positivity by Respiratory Virus

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.

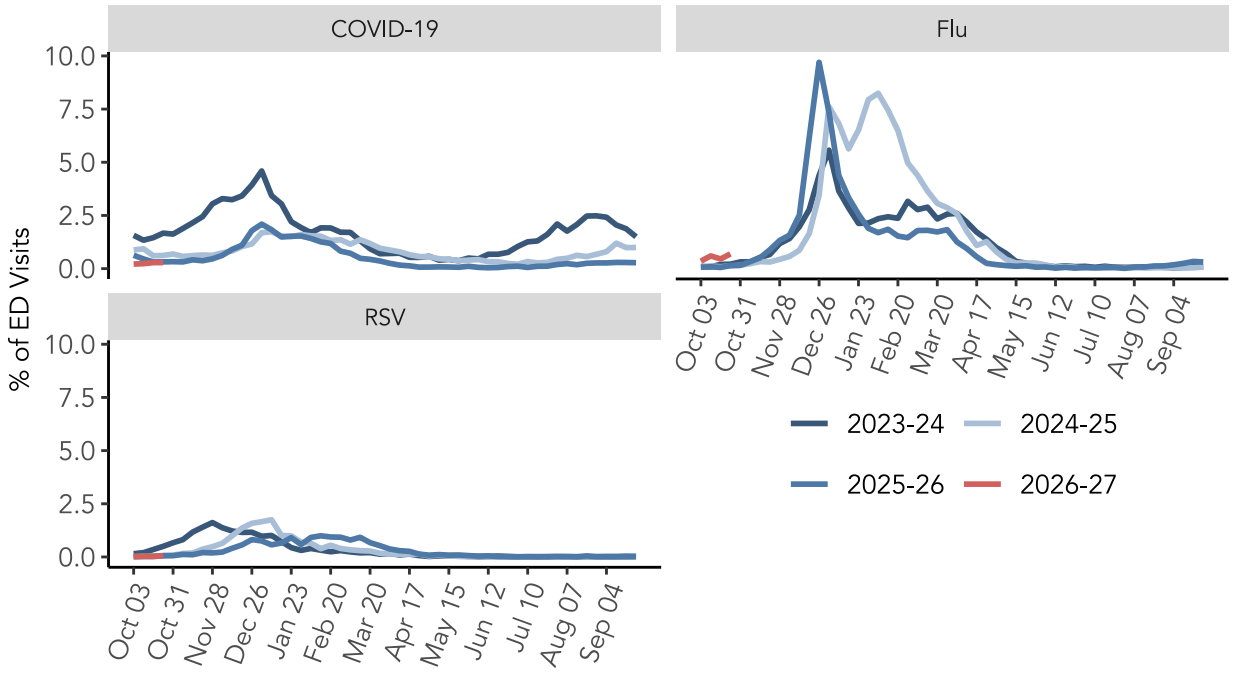


CDC Acute Respiratory Illness Activity Levels by State

Data for the week ending 2026-10-24, most recent CDC data available



Emergency Rooms Visits by Season and Diagnosis



Emergency Room Visits by Age and Diagnosis

