



Respiratory Epidemiological Summary

January 04, 2024

Summary (Epidemiological week 52, 24 Dec to 30 Dec)

Influenza A and RSV activity continues to increase; COVID-19 activity remains relatively stable or decreasing since early November.

- In epi-week 52 (Dec 24-30, 2023), 3 pediatric influenza-related deaths (aged <10 years) were reported to the BCCDC. Influenza-related deaths refer to deaths where influenza was a contributing factor but not necessarily the primary cause of death.
- Influenza A levels in wastewater continue to increase across the province. Among subtyped influenza A samples this season, the majority remain H1. Influenza facility outbreaks have increased since late November.
- RSV activity remains elevated, with increasing viral levels at most monitored wastewater plants.
- COVID-19 test positivity, hospital admissions, and deaths have decreased since early November. Cases and critical care admissions remain stable since early November.
- The proportion of emergency department and primary care visits for respiratory symptoms has continued to increase since early October across health authorities and most age groups.

National and international context

COVID-19:

- As of December 16, 2023, when the most updated national data are available, COVID-19 activity levels varied across provinces and territories, with most reporting stable or decreasing COVID-19 activity trends. Nationally, SARS-CoV-2 percent positivity remained relatively stable, although trends varied by province and territory.
- In the USA, as of December 23, 2023, COVID-19 activity for test positivity, emergency department visits, hospitalizations and deaths increased over the prior month. COVID-19 variant tracking in the USA indicates that the proportion of JN.1 is also increasing.

Influenza:

- As of December 16, 2023, influenza activity continued to increase but was within expected levels for that time of year. As of December 9, 2023, influenza A has been the most frequently reported influenza type since the start of the 2023/24 respiratory season; among those subtyped, 89% were H1.
- In the USA, as of December 23, 2023, seasonal influenza activity was elevated and continued to increase in most parts of the country. Since the start of October, influenza A was the most frequently reported type (82%); of those subtyped, 82% were H1.

RSV and other viruses:

- As of December 16, 2023, RSV activity remains elevated but is within expected levels for this time of the year. The activity of all other non-SARS-CoV-2 and non-influenza respiratory viruses is low and near expected levels for this time of year.