

Respiratory virus activity in BC:

Weekly summary – November 14, 2024

Reporting period: November 3 – 9, 2024 (Epi-week 45)

RSV activity is low; COVID-19 activity is decreasing; Influenza activity remains minimal

Influenza	RSV
Influenza activity is minimal.	RSV activity remains low but is increasing in the lower mainland.
COVID-19	Health care visits
SARS-CoV-2 levels in wastewater and COVID-19 hospital admission rates continue to decrease.	The proportion of primary care and emergency department visits for respiratory illness continues to increase in children and youth, similar to last season.

National and international context

Influenza

- In Canada, indicators of influenza activity are stable and remain at interseasonal levels.¹
- In the USA, there is minimal seasonal influenza activity occurring.²

RSV

- In Canada, RSV percent positivity is slowly increasing but remains low.¹
- In the USA, RSV activity remains low; however, there are continued signs of increased activity in the southern, southeastern, and mid-Atlantic regions, particularly in young children.²

COVID-19

- In Canada, indicators of COVID-19 activity are stable; however, trends vary across provinces and territories.¹
- In the USA, indicators for SARS-CoV-2 test positivity and COVID-19 associated hospitalizations continue to decrease overall.²

Other respiratory viruses

- In Canada, enterovirus/rhinovirus percent positivity is decreasing, and all other respiratory viruses is near expected levels typical of this time of year.¹

¹ Canadian Respiratory Virus Surveillance Report. <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/respiratory-virus-surveillance/>

² Respiratory Illnesses Data Channel. <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data/index.html>

Avian Influenza

- The identification of a presumptive positive case of H5 avian influenza (also known as bird flu) in a teenager in British Columbia by the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory has been confirmed to be the H5N1 subtype of avian influenza. Sequencing of the virus indicates it belongs to clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype D.1.1 as found among poultry in BC and elsewhere in North America.
- This is the first detection of a human case of H5N1 avian influenza acquired in Canada. Public-health activities are ongoing to determine the source of exposure and to identify and protect contacts.
- Current evidence indicates that the risk of avian influenza infection for the general public remains low at this time.
- To learn more:
 - BC government news release: First presumptive positive case of H5 avian influenza detected in B.C. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024HLTH0152-001583>
 - Statement from the Public Health Agency of Canada: Update on avian influenza and risk to Canadians. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2024/11/update-on-avian-influenza-and-risk-to-canadians.html>
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Food information on avian influenza: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/animal-health/reportable-notifiable-diseases/avian-influenza-ai>
 - BCCDC information on avian influenza: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/avian-influenza>
 - Avian influenza: How can I protect myself?: http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Avian_flu_How_can_I_protect_myself.pdf
 - HealthLinkBC information on avian influenza: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/illnesses-conditions/infectious-diseases/avian-influenza>
 - Public Health Agency of Canada information on avian influenza: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/avian-influenza-h5n1.html>
 - WorkSafeBC information on avian influenza: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/injuries-diseases/infectious-diseases/types/avian-flu>