

Current level of influenza activity: **Low**

Influenza activity trend: **Stable**

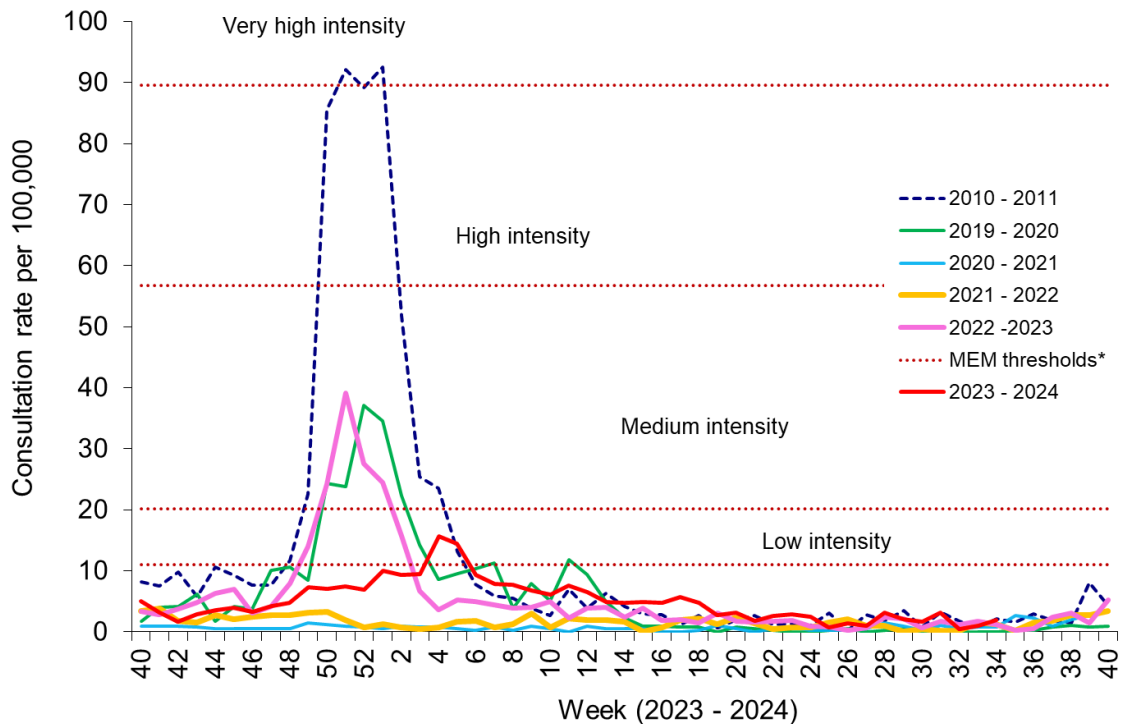
Confirmed influenza cases since 2023 Week 40: **4709** (525 influenza A(H3N2), 1036 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 2542 influenza A untyped and 606 influenza B)

During Week 34 (ending 24/08/2024) there were ten cases of influenza confirmed. Influenza is not currently circulating in Wales. COVID-19 cases have started to decline. Additionally, detections of *rhinovirus* and *adenovirus* remain elevated.

- The **Sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI)** in Wales during Week 34, was 1.9 consultations per 100,000 practice population (Table 1). The rate decreased compared to the previous week (1.0 consultations per 100,000. Figure 1).
- The **Sentinel GP consultation rate for Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)** was 85.3 per 100,000 practice population during Week 34 (Table 2 and Figure 3). This is an increase compared to the previous week (79.5 per 100,000). During week 34, Lower Respiratory Tract Infections decreased to 30.7 per 100,000 and Upper Respiratory Tract Infections increased to 55.2 per 100,000 compared to the previous week.
- The percentage of calls to **NHS Direct Wales** which were 'influenza-related' (cold/flu, cough, fever, headache, and sore throat) during Week 18 increased to 15.4% (Figure 13) (latest data available).
- During Week 34, 814 specimens received multiplex respiratory panel testing from patients attending hospitals. **Six tested positive for influenza (three influenza A(untyped), one A(H3N2), one A(H1N1) and influenza B).** Overall influenza test-positivity decreased to <0.1% from 0.2%. In those aged under 18 positivity increased to 0.9 from <0.1%, and in those aged over 18 increased to 0.7% from 0.3%. In addition, there were: 71 SARS-CoV-2, 62 rhinovirus, 36 adenovirus, 22 human metapneumovirus, 13 mycoplasma, 11 parainfluenza, 10 enterovirus, seven RSV, and one seasonal coronavirus positive samples (Figure 5). Additionally, 341 samples from patients were tested for influenza, RSV and SARS-CoV-2 only. Of these 341 samples there were **four influenza A**, three RSV and 52 SARS-CoV-2 (Figure 7). Furthermore, during week 34, 45 respiratory specimens were tested from patients in intensive care units (ICU) of which one were positive for influenza A(H1N1) (Figure 8).
- There were 44 surveillance samples from patients with ILI symptoms collected by **sentinel GPs and community pharmacies** during Week 34. Of the 44 samples reported in Week 34, five tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, two for c. pneumonia, two for parainfluenza, two for rhinovirus, one for RSV and one for human metapneumovirus as at 28/08/2024 (Figure 4).
- From all samples where influenza subtyping information was immediately available during week 34, three were influenza A(untyped), one influenza A(H3N2), and one influenza A(H1N1) (Figure 6). *Additional typing is carried out on all confirmed influenza A samples where typing results are not available from first-line testing, the additional information from these tests will be added to case totals after the end of the season.*
- Confirmed RSV case incidence in children aged under 5 increased to 4.3 per 100,000 and remains below the baseline MEM threshold of 6.3 per 100,000 (the baseline MEM threshold is used to identify the start of RSV seasons in Wales compared to levels before 2021, Figure 9).
- The 7-day rolling sums of cases hospitalised within 28 days of an influenza or RSV positive test result in the community (or up to two days post-admission) were one and one respectively during Week 33 (Figures 10 & 11) and 56 for SARS-CoV-2 during week 34 (Figure 12).
- During week 34, four **ARI outbreaks** were reported to the Public Health Wales Health Protection Team of which three were SARS-CoV-2 and one was influenza A (H1N1). All four outbreaks were in residential care homes.
- According to [EuroMoMo](#) analysis, all-cause deaths in Wales were not in excess during week 33.
- As at 23/04/2024, uptake of influenza vaccination was 72.5% in adults aged 65 years and older, 39.1% in those aged 6 months to 64 years at clinical risk, 42.8% in two and three-year-old children, 61.9% in children aged four to 10 years and 49.7% in children aged 11 to 15 years (Table 3) (latest data available).

Respiratory infection activity in Wales

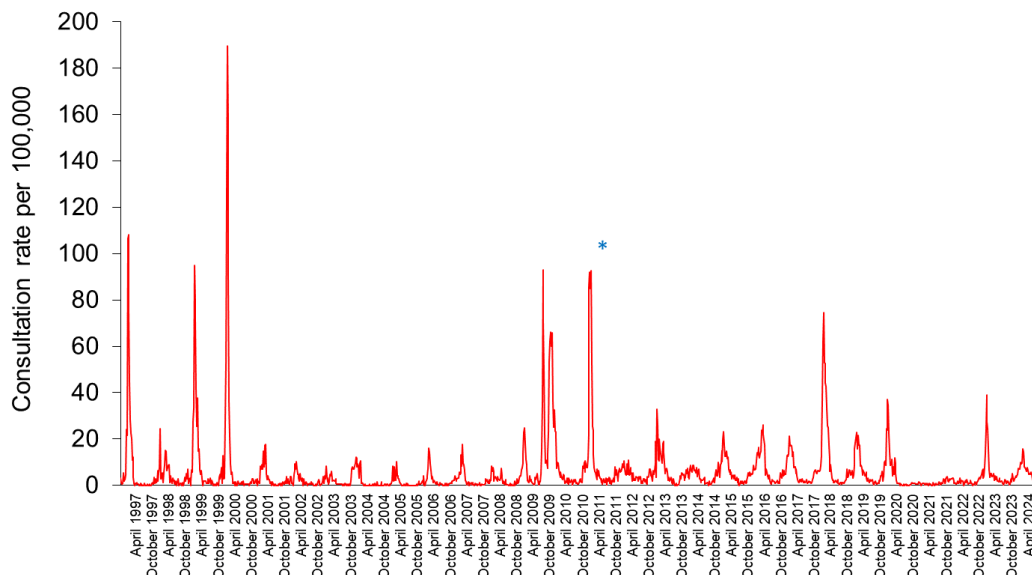
Figure 1. Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (as of 24/08/2024)



* The Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) threshold calculated for Wales ILI consultation rates is 11.1 per 100,000. MEM thresholds used in this chart are based on influenza from 2010-11 to 2018-19 seasons. Caution should be used when comparing consultation rates from March 2020 onwards to previous periods due to the changes in health-seeking behaviours brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Clinical consultations for ILI seasons are monitored from W40 to W40, the most recent data is presented in red.

Figure 2. Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (Week 50 1996 – Week 34 2024)



* Reporting changed to Audit+ surveillance system

Table 1. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ILI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 29 – Week 34 2024 (as of 24/08/2024).

Age group	29	30	31	32	33	34
< 1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1 - 4	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5 - 14	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
15 - 24	2.3	6.7	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
25 - 34	4.1	2.0	7.7	0.0	6.3	2.7
35 - 44	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9	0.0	2.6
45 - 64	1.0	0.0	2.7	1.0	0.0	2.4
65 - 74	2.3	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	5.6
75+	2.3	2.1	2.1	0.0	2.2	0.0
Total	2.0	1.7	3.1	0.5	1.0	1.9

Table 2. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ARI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 29 – Week 34 2024 (as of 24/08/2024).

Age group	29	30	31	32	33	34
< 1	825.0	718.2	451.5	531.0	393.6	469.5
1 - 4	473.4	554.3	353.9	320.4	258.4	256.7
5 - 14	205.6	176.7	105.0	106.0	66.5	76.4
15 - 24	112.0	73.4	103.7	82.3	55.9	96.8
25 - 34	109.8	87.4	97.9	65.6	63.2	85.0
35 - 44	124.7	102.1	93.1	88.6	56.0	59.3
45 - 64	98.3	89.2	77.7	67.3	75.9	64.6
65 - 74	133.9	107.1	107.6	102.8	61.8	83.3
75+	123.7	119.9	122.8	92.6	111.0	88.0
Total	141.4	124.3	108.9	94.7	79.5	85.3

Figure 3. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ARI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 34 2023 – Week 34 2024.

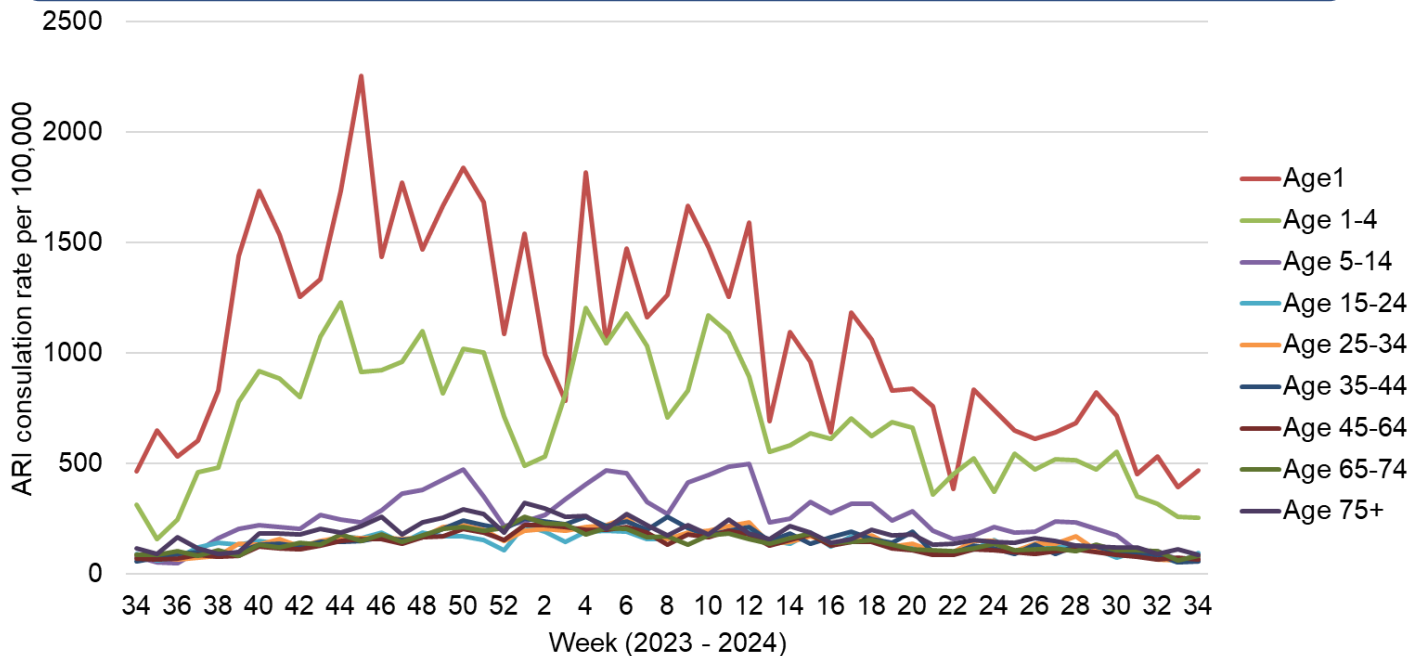
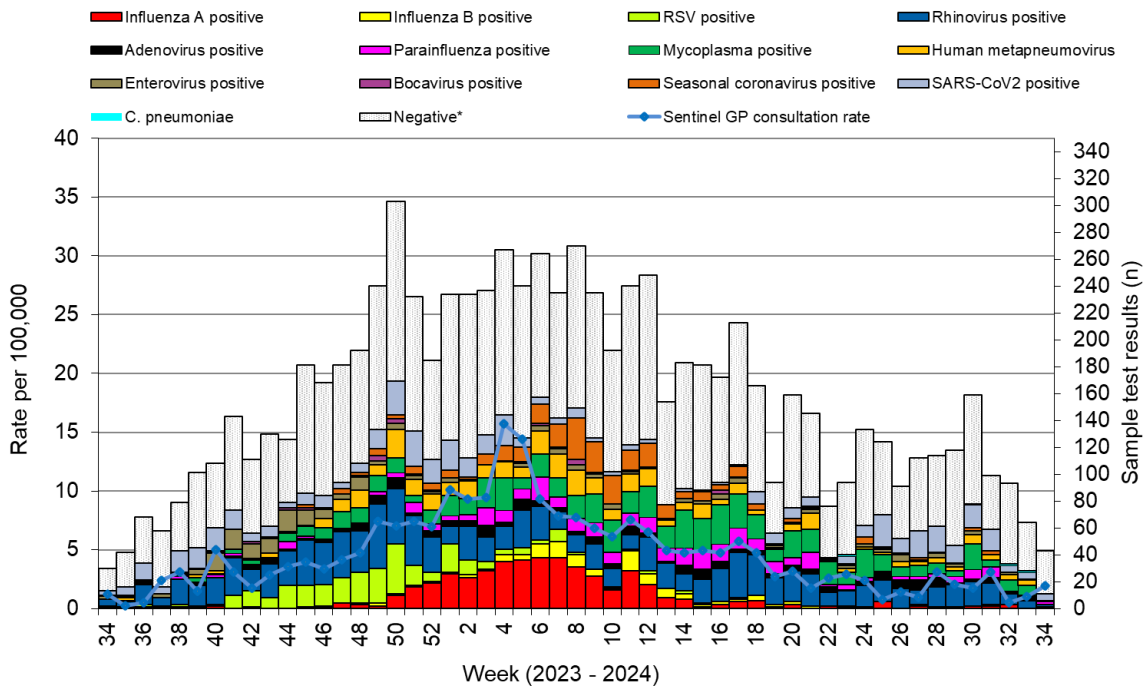
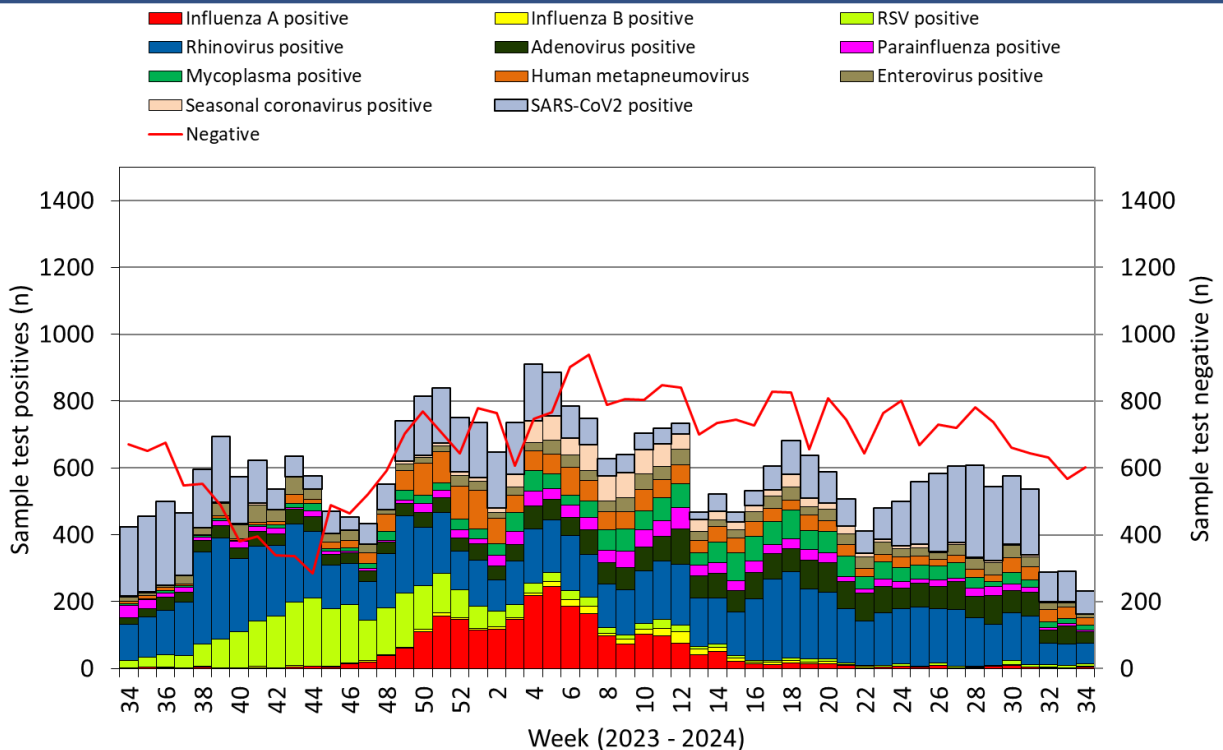


Figure 4. Specimens submitted for virological testing by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies as of 24/08/2024, by week of sample collection, Week 34 2023 to Week 34 2024.



* Tested negative for influenza, adenovirus, rhinovirus, RSV, parainfluenza, mycoplasma, human metapneumovirus, enterovirus, bocavirus and coronaviruses. Samples which test positive for more than on pathogen will appear more than once in the chart. **Results for the latest week will underestimate activity as not all samples will have been received, tested, and authorised at time of writing this report.**

Figure 5. Specimens submitted for virological testing for hospital patients and non-sentinel GPs as of 24/08/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 34 2023 to Week 34 2024.



This chart summarises respiratory panel test data and does not include data for patients tested SOLELY for SARS-CoV2. Combined data for tests carried out in Public Health Wales Microbiology: Cardiff laboratory, provided by Public Health Wales Microbiology Cardiff Specialist Virology Centre. This chart summarises individual test results, patients who are positive for multiple infections within a given week will appear multiple times. Samples which test positive for more than on pathogen will appear more than once in the chart.

Figure 6. Flu subtypes based on specimens submitted for virological testing by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies, hospital patients, and non-sentinel GPs, as of 24/08/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 34 2023 to Week 34 2024.

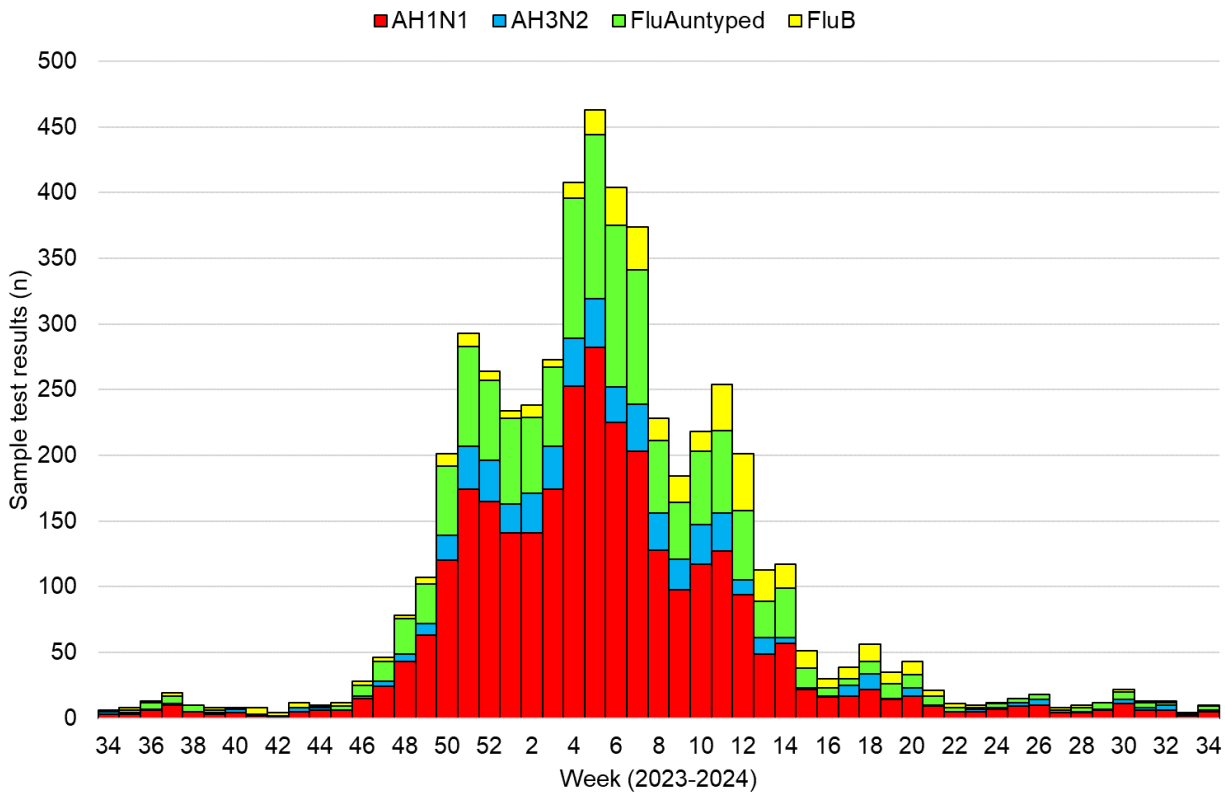


Figure 7. Specimens from hospital patients submitted for RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV2 testing only, as of 24/08/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 34 2023 to Week 34 2024.

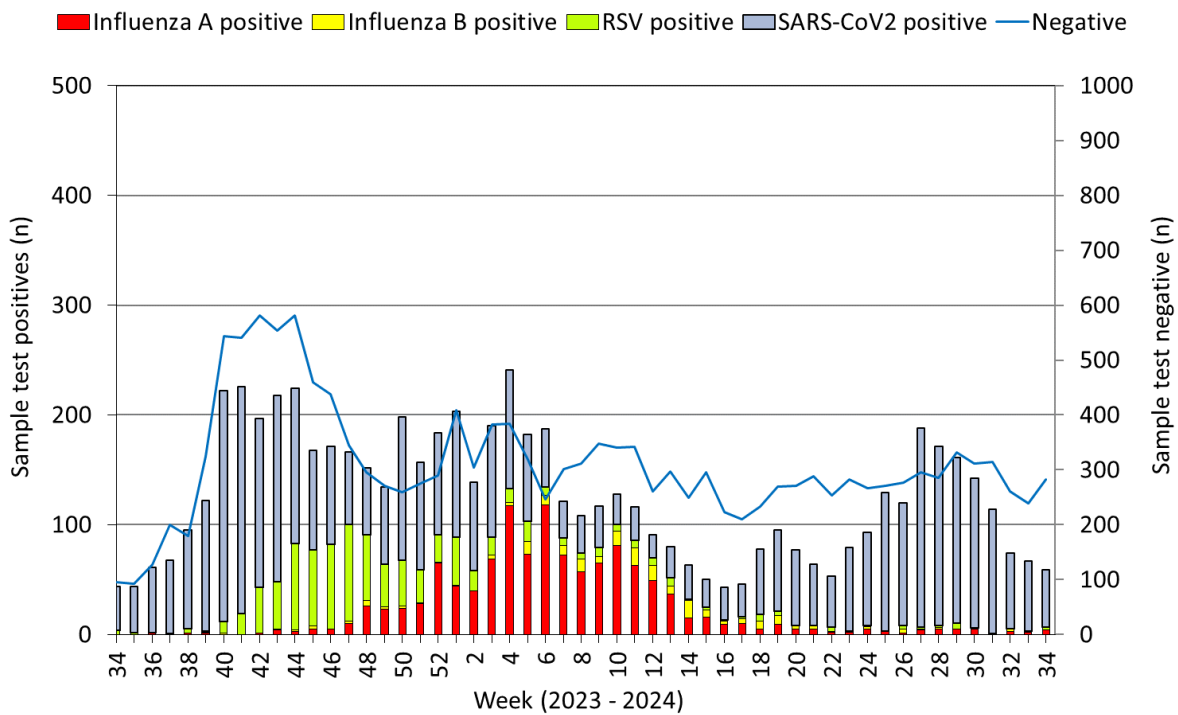
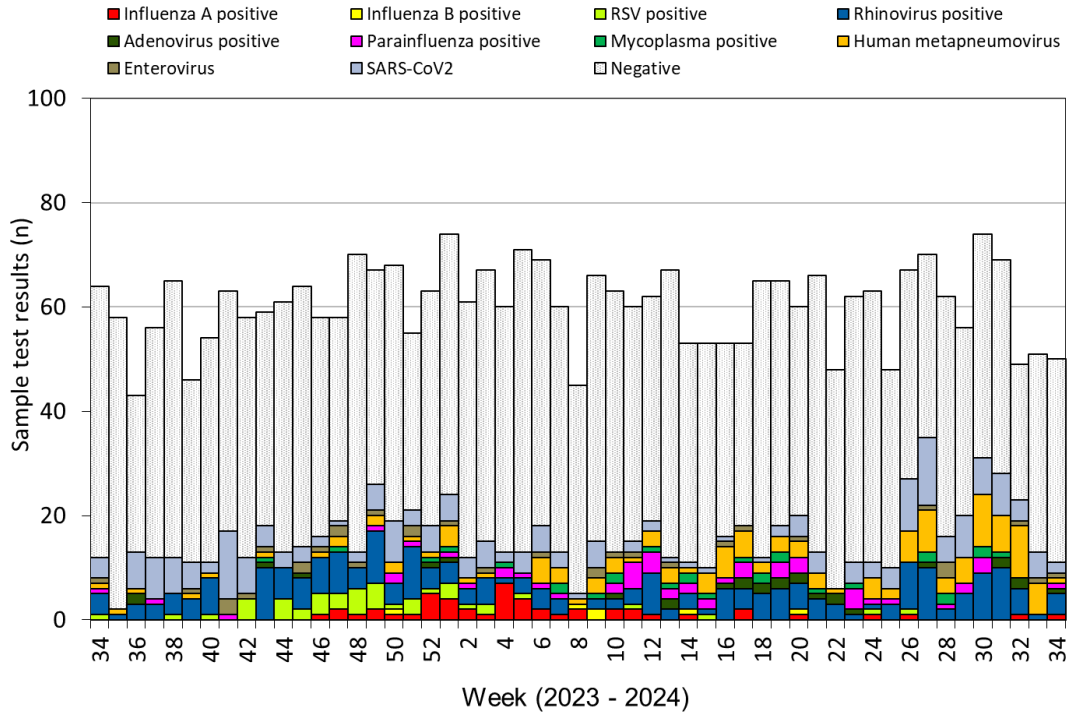
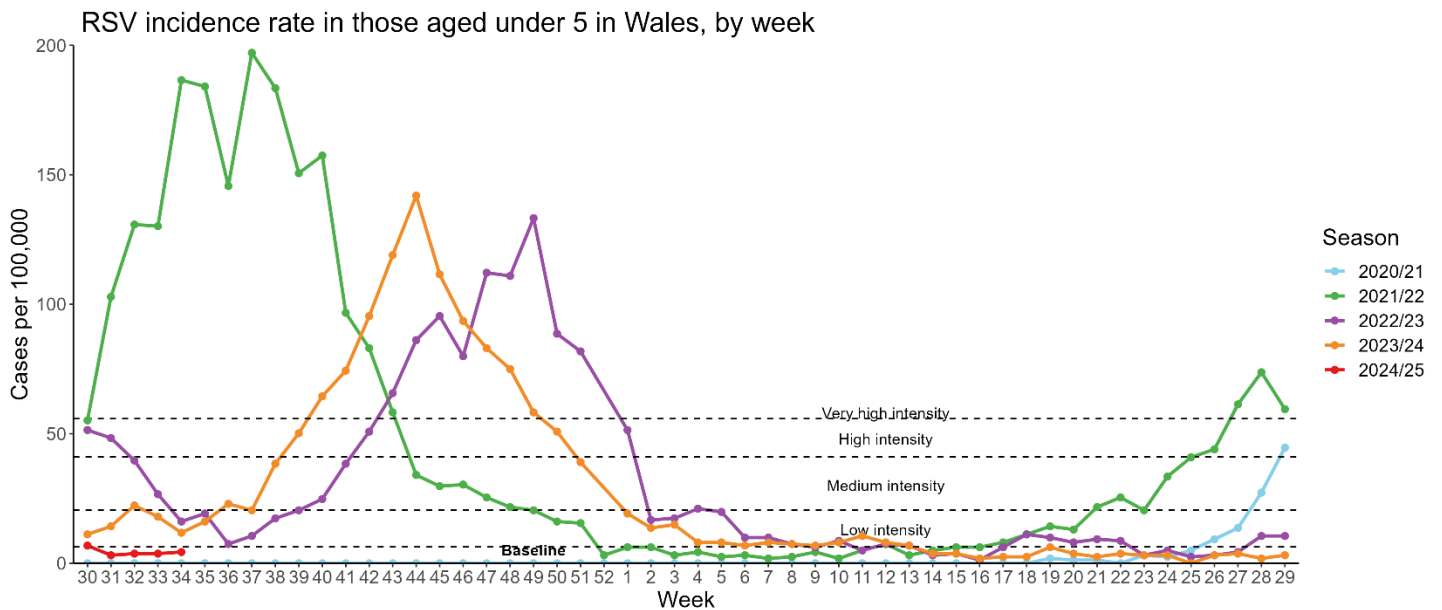


Figure 8. Specimens submitted for virological testing for ICU patients, by week of sample collection, Week 34 2023 to Week 34 2024.



This chart summarises respiratory panel test data and does NOT include data for patients tested SOLELY for SARS-CoV2. Samples which test positive for more than one pathogen will appear more than once in the chart.

Figure 9. RSV incidence rate per 100,000 population aged under five years, week 30 2020 to Week 34 2024.



RSV seasons are monitored from W30 to W29, the most recent data is presented in red.

ARI – Hospital admissions

Figure 10*. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an influenza positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 18/08/2024.

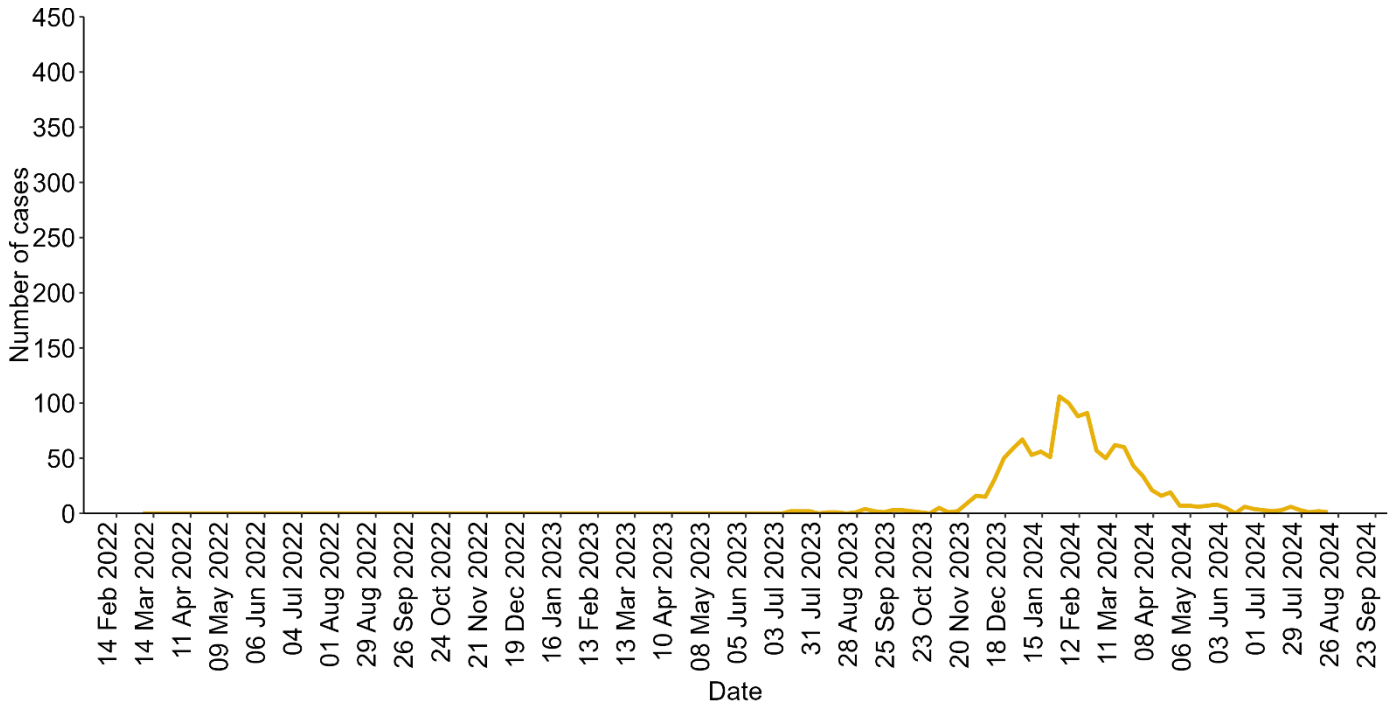


Figure 11*. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an RSV positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 18/08/2024.

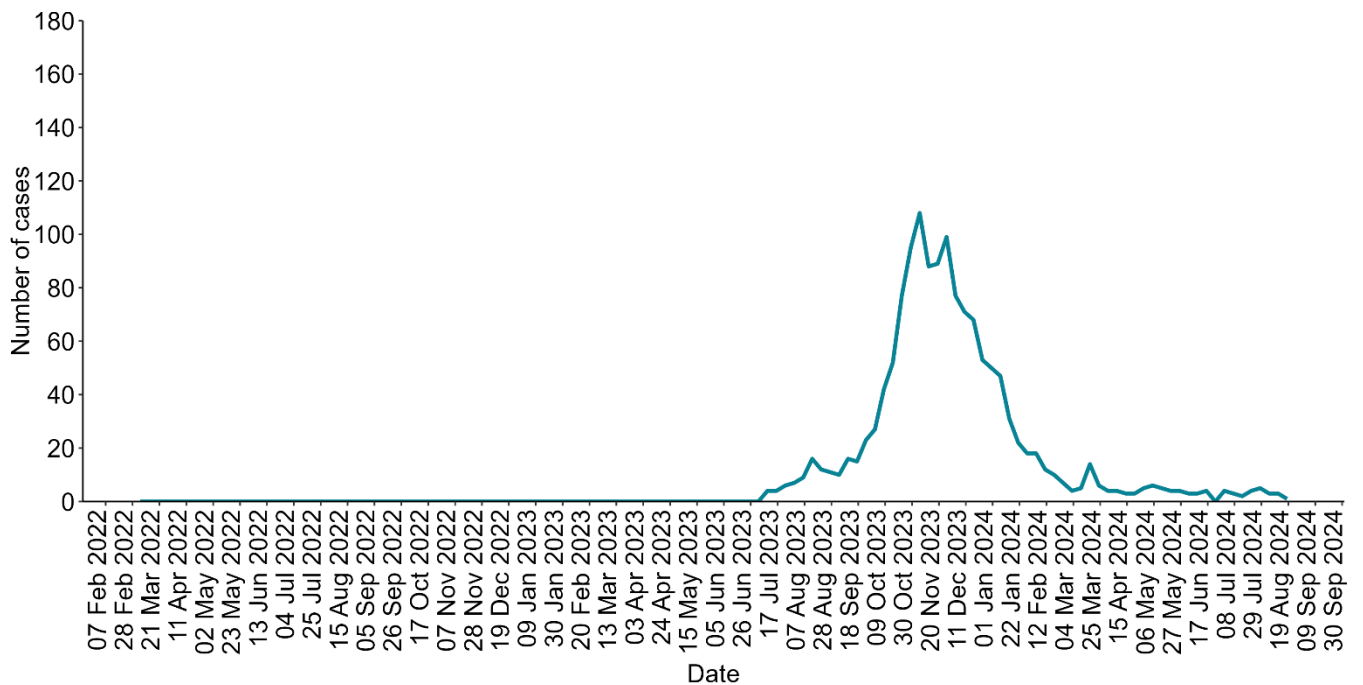
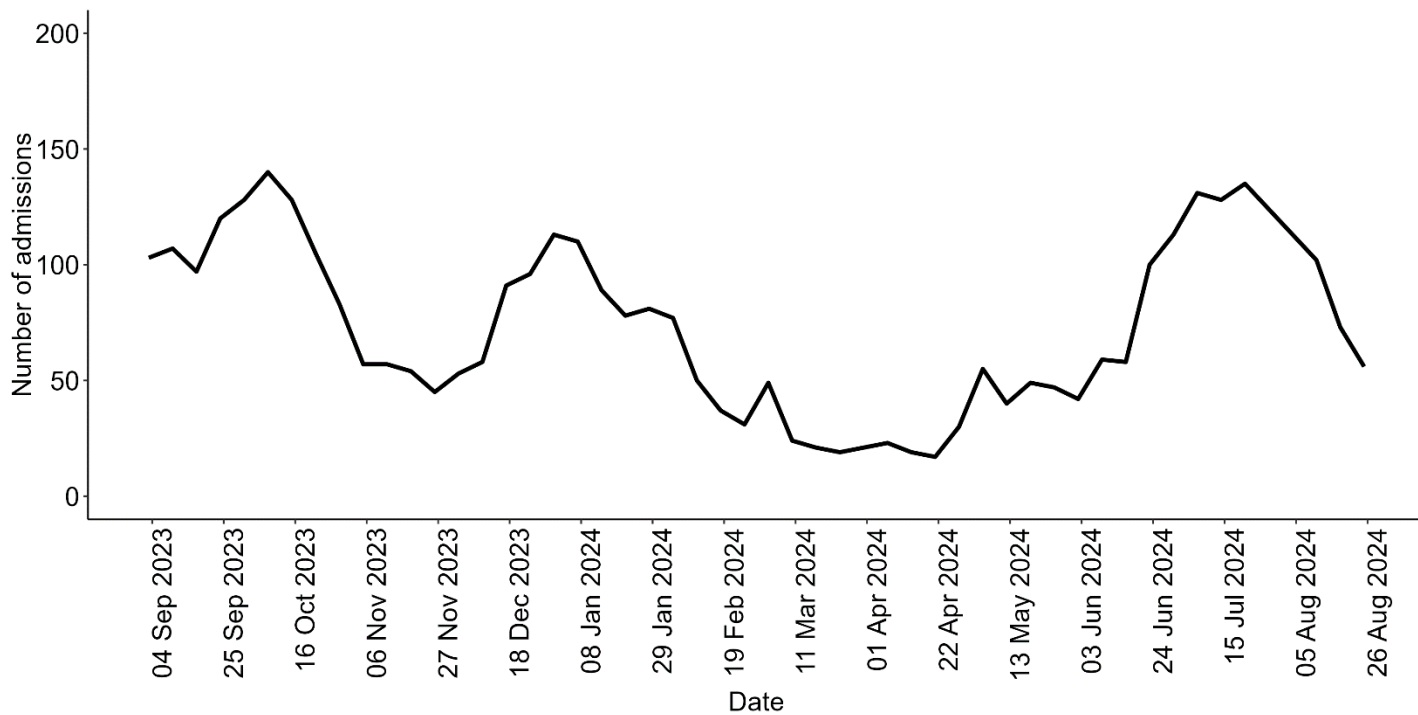
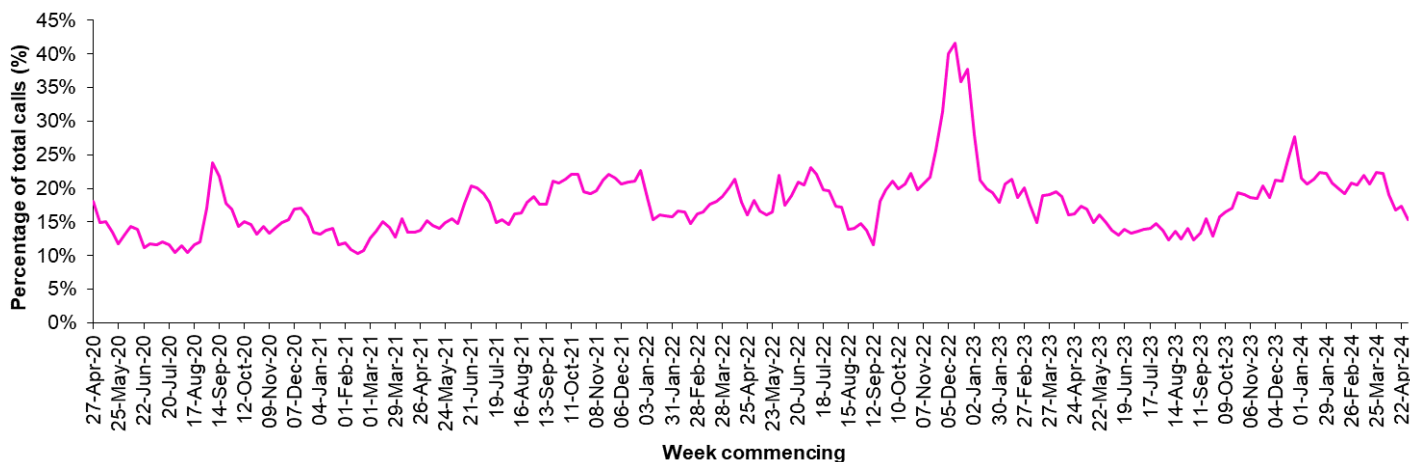


Figure 12. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an Covid-19 positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 24/08/2024.



Calls to NHS Direct Wales

Figure 13. Influenza related calls to NHS Direct Wales¹ (as a percentage of total calls) from Week 18 2020 - Week 18 2024 (latest data available).



¹ Data supplied by Health Statistics and Analysis Unit, Welsh Government. Flu related calls are the sum of calls recorded as 'cold/flu', 'cough', 'headache', 'fever' and 'sore throat'. Following changes to the NHS Direct calls system, including the start of the 111 pilot, there has been a change in the way in which denominator data are calculated for this chart, NHS Direct Wales now count the total number of nurse triaged calls (i.e. calls which could have symptom data recorded against them), note that 111 includes out-of-hours calls.

Influenza Vaccine Uptake in Wales

Table 3. Uptake of influenza immunisations in GP Practice patients in Wales 2023/24 (as of 23/04/2024) (latest data available).

Influenza immunisation uptake in the 2023/24 season	
People aged 65y and older	72.5%
People younger than 65y in a clinical risk group	39.1%
Children aged two & three years	42.8%
Children aged between four & ten years	61.9%
Children aged between 11 & 15 years	49.7%
Total NHS staff	40.8%
NHS staff with direct patient contact	40.5%

The end of season report Influenza in Wales 2019/20 is available to download and contains a full breakdown of vaccination uptake amongst eligible groups.

Link to report: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/annual-influenza-surveillance-and-influenza-vaccination-uptake-reports/>

Influenza activity – UK and international summary

- As of Week 33, GP ILI consultations increased to 2.2 per 100,000 in Scotland.
- During Week 32, 3,831 samples testing positive for influenza were reported in England of which 50 were positive for influenza (17 influenza A(not subtyped), 32 influenza A(H3N2), and one influenza B. Overall influenza positivity remained stable around 1.3% in England in week 32 and decreased to 1.5% in Scotland in week 33.
- UK summary data are available from the [UKHSA Influenza and COVID-19 Surveillance Report](#) and [COVID-19 & Respiratory Surveillance \(shinyapps.io\)](#)
- The WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported during week 33, that influenza positivity is below the 10% positivity epidemic threshold at 1%. Of the 28 countries and areas reporting on influenza intensity, none reported medium intensity or higher. Of the 27 countries and areas reporting on geographic spread of influenza viruses within a country or area, two reported widespread or regional distribution. There were 21 confirmed influenza virus infection detections reported from sentinel primary care.
Source: European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS): <https://erviss.org/>
- The WHO reported on 22/08/2024, based on data up to 11/08/2024 that in the Northern hemisphere elevated activity continued to be reported in countries in Central America, the Caribbean, Middle and Western Africa, Southeast Asia and Southern Asia mainly due to (A(H3) viruses), except in Southern Asia where A(H1N1) predominated.
- In the Southern hemisphere, influenza activity continues to be elevated in South America (influenza A(H3) and B viruses), East Africa (A(H1N1)), Southern Africa (influenza B), and Oceania (A(H3N2) viruses). **Source:** WHO influenza update:<https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/surveillance-and-monitoring/influenza-updates/current-influenza-update>
- Based on FluNet reporting (as of 21/06/2024), during the period from 13/05/2024 – 26/05/2024 National Influenza Centres and other national influenza laboratories from 131 countries, areas or territories reported influenza surveillance data. The WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System laboratories tested more than 354,429 specimens during that period, of which 20,741 were positive for influenza viruses, 17,211 (83.0%) were typed as influenza A (of the subtyped influenza A viruses, 6,275 (63.5%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 3,604 (36.5%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the 354,429 samples testing positive for influenza viruses, 3,530 tested positive for Influenza B (17.0%). **Source:** Flu Net: <https://www.who.int/tools/flunet>

Australia and New Zealand update

- In New Zealand, during the week ending 18/08/2024, community influenza-like illness activity (ILI) activity in the community remained stable. Through seasonal sentinel community influenza surveillance, 19 influenza cases were identified at sentinel practices during the week ending 18/08/2024.
Source: Institute of Environmental Science & Research, New Zealand
<https://www.esr.cri.nz/digital-library/respiratory-illness-dashboard/>
- In Australia, according to the latest available update (fortnight ending 11/08/2024), influenza-like illness (ILI) activity in the community this year has decreased. To date, the majority of nationally reported laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were influenza A.
Source: Australian Influenza Surveillance Report and Activity Updates.
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/australian-respiratory-surveillance-reports-2024?language=en>

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in North America

- The USA CDC reported that the RSV positivity rate increased in week 33.
Source: CDC RSV national trends: [National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System | CDC](#)

COVID-19 – UK and international summary

- As of 20/07/2024, there were 4.6 new positive PCR episodes per 100,000 population in Wales, for the most recent 7-day reporting period. Latest COVID-19 data from Public Health Wales is available from: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- The latest UKHSA COVID-19 data summary is available from: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- WHO situation updates on COVID-19 are available from: <https://covid19.who.int/>

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – latest update from WHO and ECDC

- WHO was notified of three new MERS cases between 10 and 17 April 2024 by the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Since 10 April and as of 17 April 2024, three new MERS-CoV cases, have been reported by Saudi Arabia. WHO Global Alert and Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>
- Rapid risk assessments of the situation from ECDC, which contain epidemiological updates and advice for travellers and healthcare workers, are available from: <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus>
- Further updates and advice for healthcare workers and travellers are available from WHO: <http://www.who.int/emergencies/mers-cov/en/> and from NaTHNaC: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/news/237/mers-cov-update-travelhealthpro-country-pages>

Human infection with avian influenza A

The WHO has published an updated assessment of recent influenza A(H5N1) virus events in animals and people. Currently, the global public health risk of influenza A(H5N1) viruses to be low, while the risk of infection for occupationally exposed persons is low to moderate, depending on the risk mitigation measures in place. Transmission between animals continues to occur and, to date, a limited number of human infections have been reported. 14 August 2024: [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-joint-fao-who-woah-assessment-of-recent-influenza-a\(h5n1\)-virus-events-in-animals-and-people](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-joint-fao-who-woah-assessment-of-recent-influenza-a(h5n1)-virus-events-in-animals-and-people)

Other updates on zoonotic influenza infections and risks to humans are available from the WHO Global Alert & Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>

Links:

Public Health Wales influenza surveillance webpage:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=457&pid=25480>

Public Health Wales COVID-19 data dashboard:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public Health Wales interactive report on hospitalisations in influenza and RSV cases:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection/viz/ARI-Hospitaladmissionsdashboard/ARIhospitaladmissionsdashboard?publish=yes>

GP Sentinel Surveillance of Infections Scheme:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=457&pid=27918>

NICE influenza antiviral usage guidance:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158>

England influenza and COVID-19 surveillance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2023-to-2024-season>

Scotland seasonal respiratory surveillance:

<https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications>

Northern Ireland influenza surveillance:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/seasonal-influenza>

European Centre for Communicable Disease:

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/>

European influenza information:

<http://flunewseurope.org/>

Advice on influenza immunisation

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/>

Advice on influenza immunisation (for intranet users)

[Influenza \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

For further information on this report, please email Public Health Wales using:

surveillance.requests@wales.nhs.uk