

WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGIST REPORT

December 18, 2023



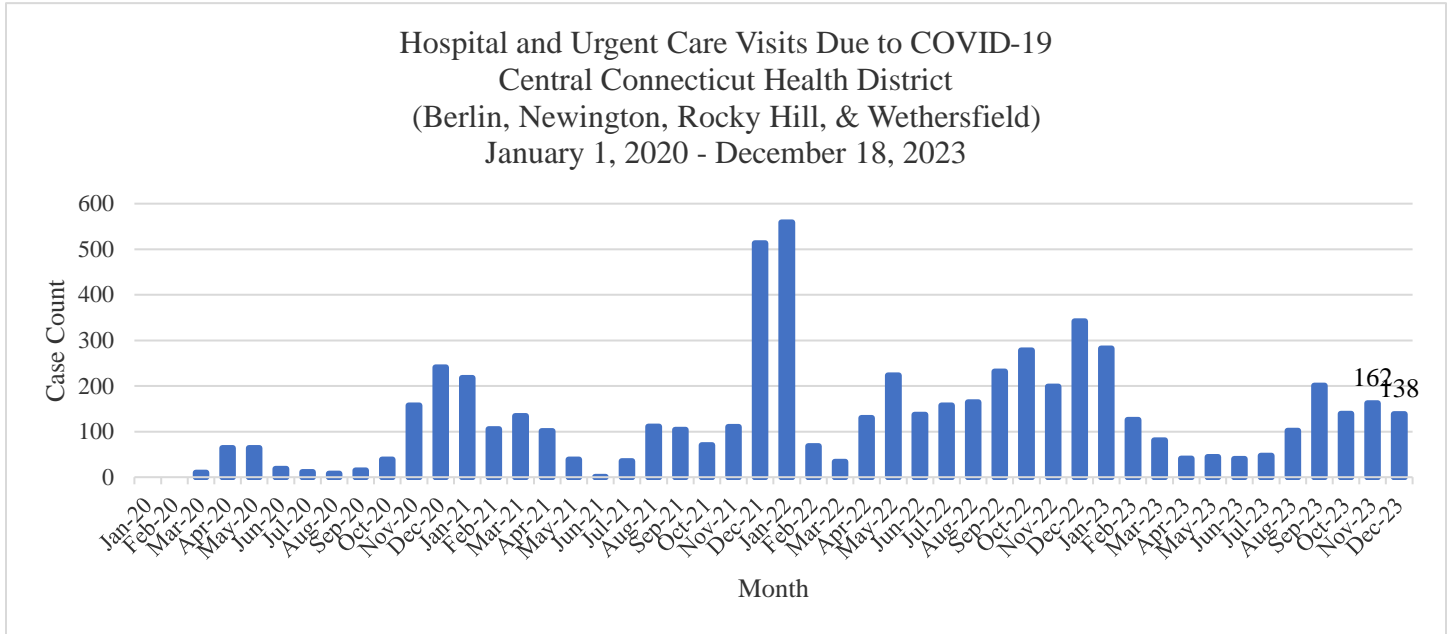
Christine DePierro-Gacek, MAT, MPH
EPIDEMIOLOGIST, Central Connecticut Health District

RESPIRATORY VIRAL SEASON

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is the most prevalent laboratory-confirmed virus circulating at this time, however laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza are increasing and will most likely continue to increase throughout the season. COVID-19 is still circulating along with RSV and flu. Remember, if you are sick stay home to prevent the spread of germs to others.

COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE

Data for COVID-19 was collected on December 18, 2023 from EpiCenter. The bar graph below illustrates the syndromic surveillance of hospital and urgent care visits due to COVID-19 (those experiencing symptoms with a COVID-19 diagnosis) in our district. Fifty-seven cases were reported between 12/12-12/18.



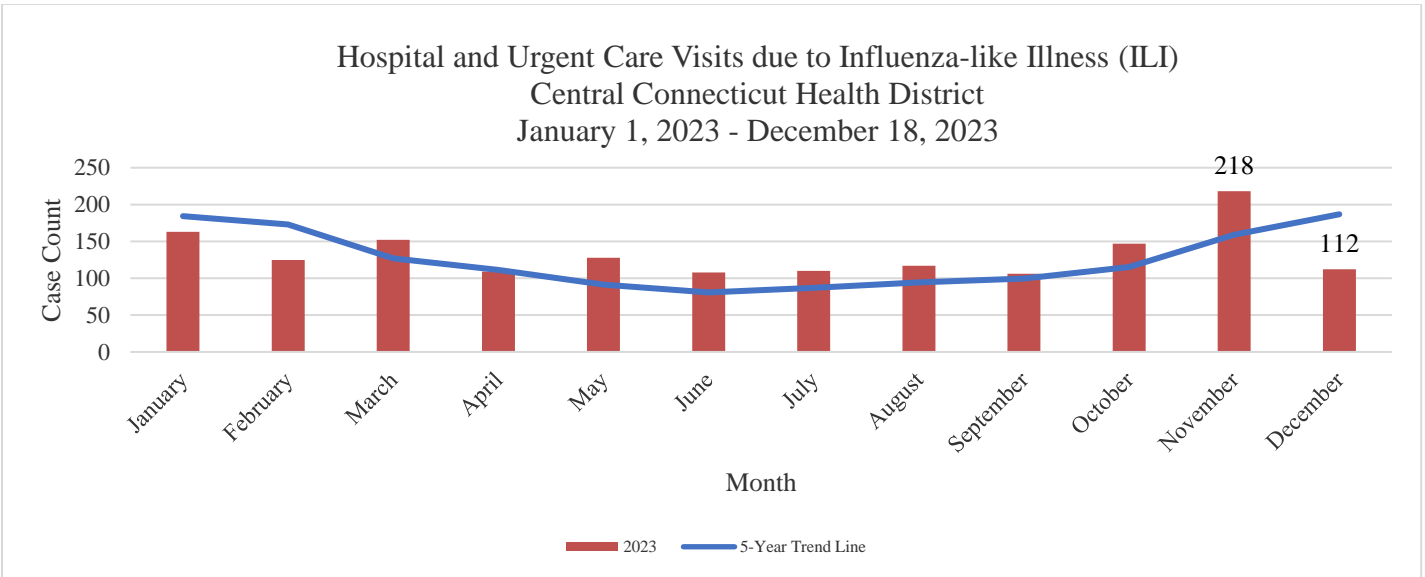
CCHD no longer has at-home COVID-19 test kits; however you can go to www.covid.gov/tests to order four free at-home tests as of November 20th. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of 8 tests. School districts are able order at-home tests for distribution in schools. Please refer to the U.S. Department of Education’s, “Letter to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) Regarding the COVID-19 Testing Supply Program” [Letter to Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\) Regarding the COVID-19 Testing Supply Program | U.S. Department of Education](#).

If you would like to get tested for COVID-19, please contact our Clinical Health Supervisor, Lisa Coakley to make an appointment for a rapid PCR test. Please call (860) 335-7158 or email lcoakley@ccthd.org. Our clinic is located at 506 Cromwell Avenue in Rocky Hill. For more information on clinic offerings, please visit: <https://www.ccthd.org/chs>

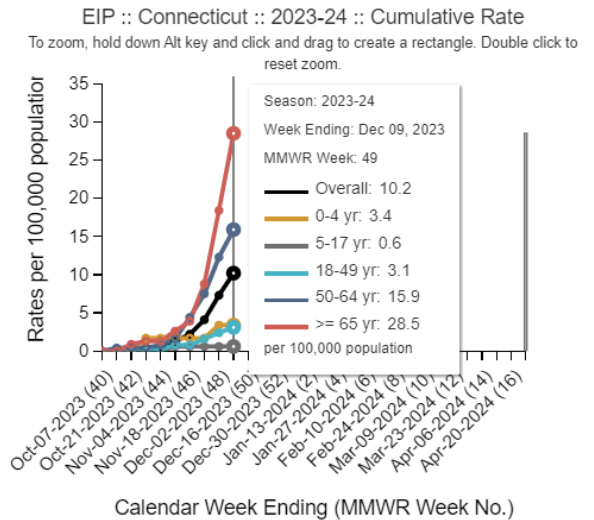
INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE

Data for Influenza-like Illness (ILI) was collected on December 18, 2023 from EpiCenter. The graph on the following page illustrates the syndromic surveillance of hospital and urgent care visits due to ILI five- year average trend line (2018-2022) compared to this year’s cases. Other circulating respiratory viruses can present as influenza-like illness. ILI is defined as having a fever and a cough or sore throat.

Hospital and Urgent Care Visits due to Influenza-like Illness (ILI)
 Central Connecticut Health District
 January 1, 2023 - December 18, 2023

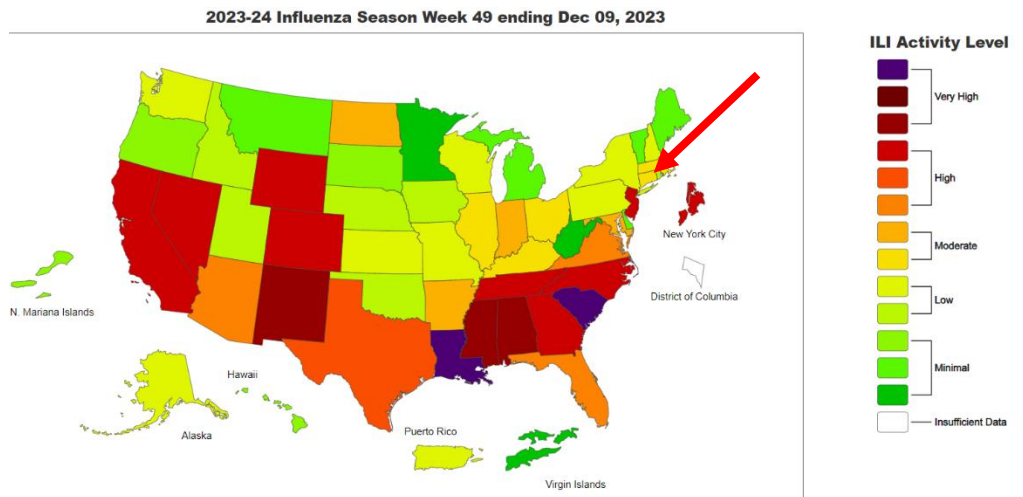


In Connecticut, the majority of those hospitalized with influenza are those who are 65 years of age or older (28.5 per 100,000 population) followed by those who are 50-64 years of age (15.9 per 100,000 population) and those who are 0-4 years of age (3.4 per 100,000 population). The figure to the right can be found at <https://gis.cdc.gov/GRASP/Fluview/FluHospRates.html>



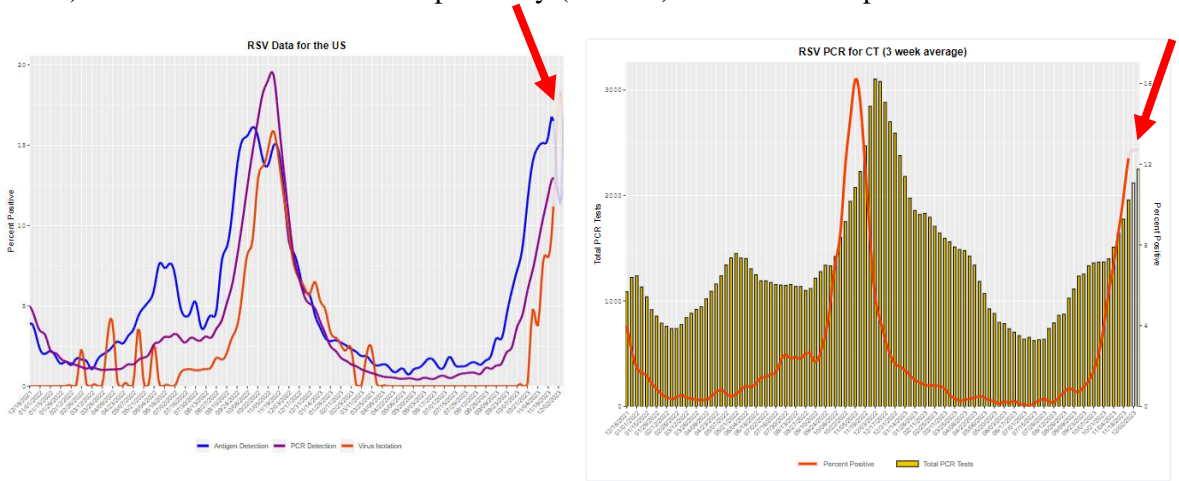
Traveling during the holidays? Take a look at the CDC’s FLUView Interactive Map at <https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/fluview/main.html> This system monitors visits for

respiratory illness that includes fever plus a cough or sore throat (ILI), not laboratory-confirmed influenza and may capture patient visits due to other respiratory pathogens that cause similar symptoms. Connecticut’s ILI Activity Level is in the Moderate range. We can expect to see an increase in respiratory illness due to holiday get togethers and travel as we enter the New Year.



RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

Nationally, RSV antigen (blue line), viral isolation (red line) and PCR (purple line) percent positivity continue to increase (line graph on left). Connecticut RSV PCR test positivity (red line) is also on the upward trend as of December 14th (see bar graph to the right).



Since September 1, 2023, our district was notified of 40 (+7) laboratory-confirmed of influenza (94% influenza type A), and 93 (+14) laboratory-confirmed cases of RSV in the CTEDSS database (see Figure 1 below). The majority of laboratory-confirmed RSV cases were among children ages zero to nine years of age (see Figure 2 below) with most of them infants, ages 0 to 2 years of age, (77%).

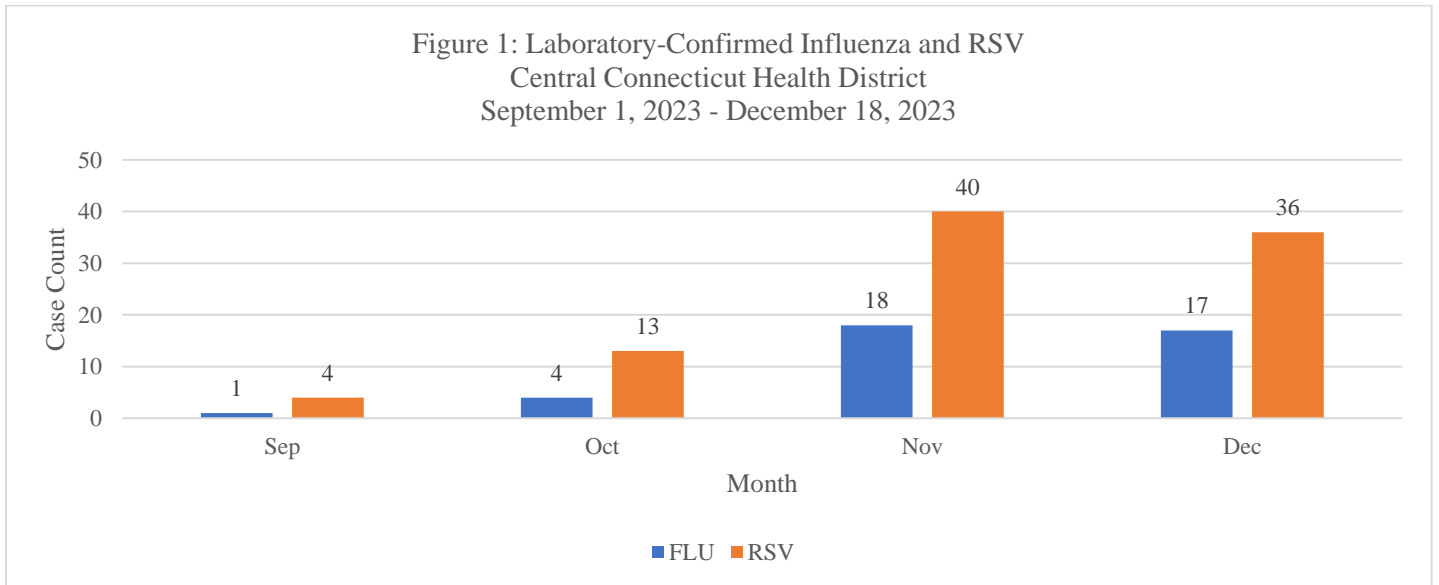
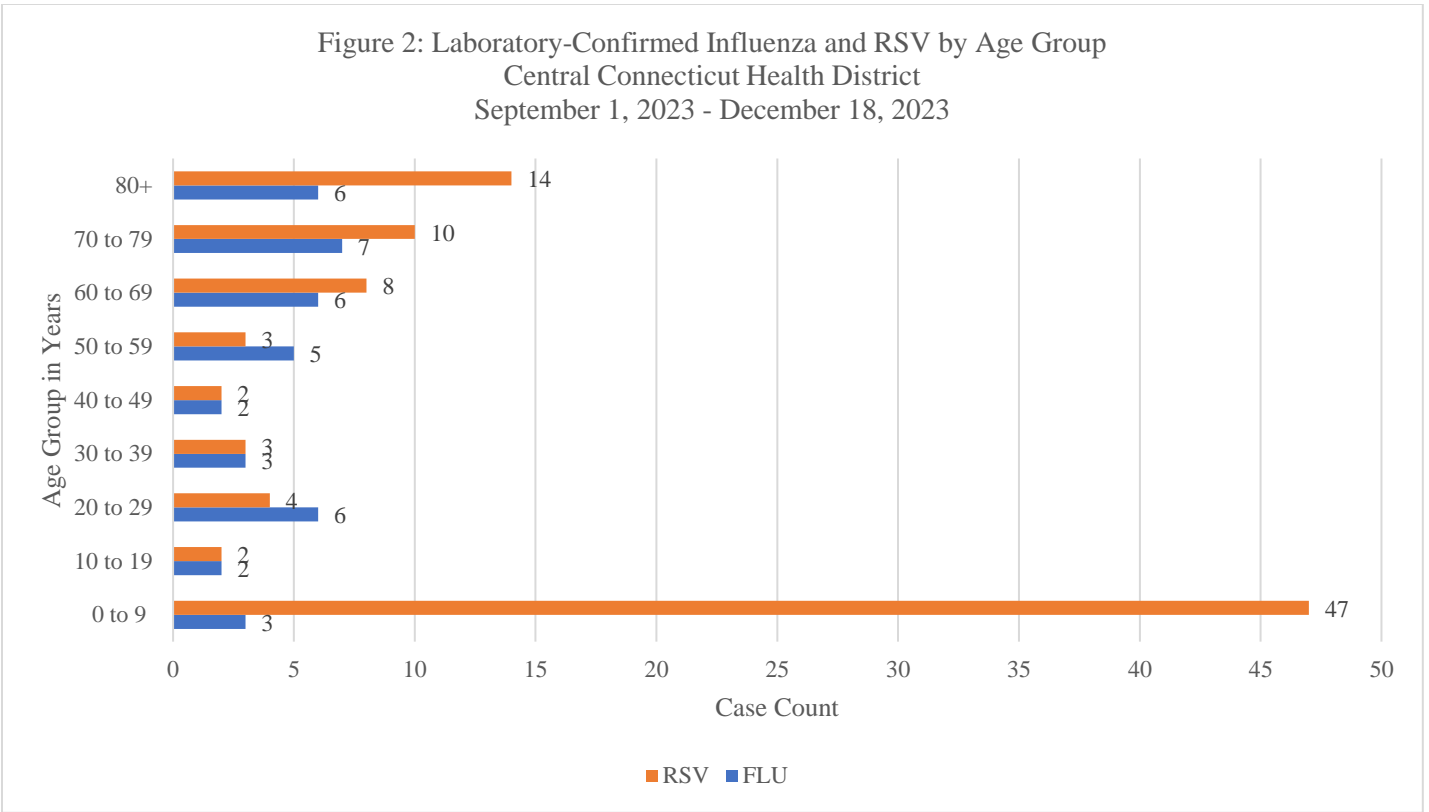


Figure 2: Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza and RSV by Age Group
 Central Connecticut Health District
 September 1, 2023 - December 18, 2023



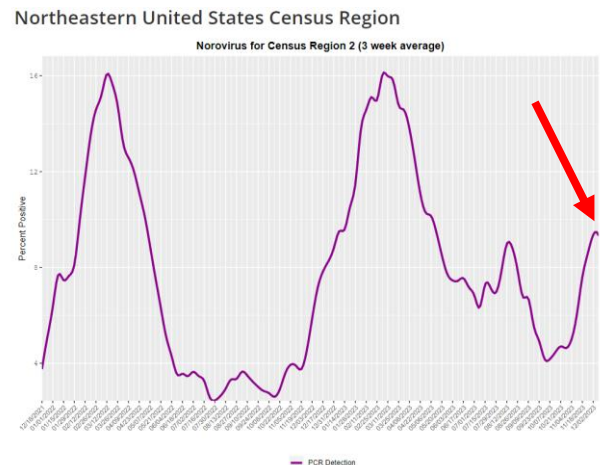
NATIONAL RESPIRATORY & ENTERIC VIRUS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (NREVSS)

The National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) is a laboratory-based system that monitors temporal and geographic circulation patterns (patterns occurring in time and place) of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), human parainfluenza viruses (HPIV), human metapneumovirus (HMPV), respiratory adenoviruses, human coronavirus, and gastrointestinal viruses: rotavirus, and norovirus. Participating laboratories report weekly to CDC the total number of tests performed that week, and the number of those tests that were positive. Middlesex and Yale are the only contributing health organizations in Connecticut that report respiratory and enteric virus surveillance data to the CDC. Data from NREVSS was updated December 14, 2023.

Norovirus test positivity remains high in the Northeast (9.3%).

The figure to the right illustrates the three week average percent positivity since December 14, 2021. CCHD will continue to conduct surveillance and report on significant trends. Norovirus is the leading cause of vomiting and diarrhea, and foodborne illness in the United States. People of all ages can get infected and sick with norovirus, which spreads very easily and quickly.

<https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/prevention.html>



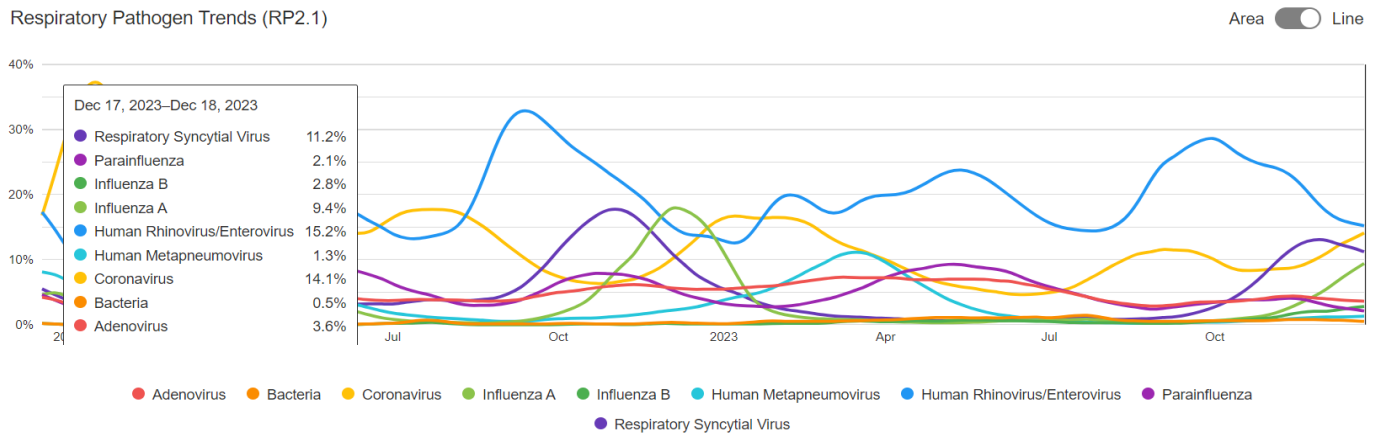
Human Parainfluenza Virus (HPIV) Type 2 and Type 3 percent positivity had a significant increase in antigen detection. Nationally, HPIV type 2 and 3 antigen detection both went from zero to 8.3%. The incubation period for HPIV is generally 2 to 6 days. HPIV-2 usually causes croup and can cause upper and lower respiratory illness, and cold-like symptoms. HPIV-3 is more often associated with bronchiolitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

Seasonal coronaviruses, Rotavirus, and human metapneumovirus detection data appear to show no concerning increases.

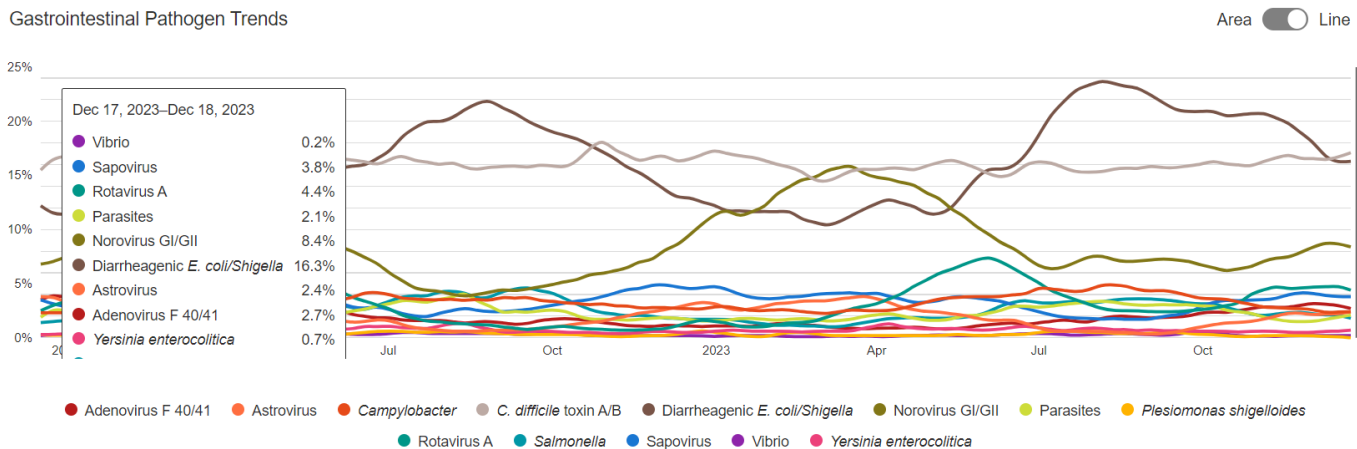
BIOFIRE SYNDROMIC TRENDS

Biofire Syndromic Trends is a software feature from BioFire that provides pathogen circulation trends. BioFire is a syndromic infectious disease diagnostics company that provides healthcare providers with accurate and comprehensive results in a short period of time. <https://www.biofire.com/products/filmarray/biofire-syndromic-trends/>

The figure on the next page illustrates aggregate BioFire data for respiratory pathogen trends as of December 11, 2023. Human Rhinovirus/Enterovirus still is the main pathogen (15.2%, -.2) that individuals in the US are testing positive for, followed by Coronavirus (14.1%, +2.3) of which 9.9% are SARS-CoV-2, RSV (11.2%, -1.3), and influenza A (9.4%, +2.5).



The figure below illustrates aggregate BioFire data for gastrointestinal pathogen trends as of December 18, 2023. *C.difficile* toxin A/B (17.1%, -.3) is the main pathogen that individuals in the US are testing positive for, followed by diarrheagenic *E.coli/Shigella* (16.3%, -.7), Norovirus (8.4%, -1.8), Rotavirus A (4.4%. -.4) and Sapovirus (3.8%, -.2).



PREVENTION

Not only are respiratory viruses circulating at this time, but gastrointestinal pathogens are as well. The best way to prevent the spread of infectious respiratory or gastrointestinal illness is to:

- Cover your cough and sneezes,
- **Wash your hands often**,
- Get vaccinated,
- Stay home when you are ill,
- Wear a mask in crowded places,
- Minimize close contact with sick people,
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, and
- Stay hydrated.



FOOD RECALLS

The following foods are being recalled because they are contaminated. Please check your cupboards and throw out any of these items:

New this week:

- Quaker Oats granola bars and cereals (potential for *Salmonella*). For more information please visit: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/quaker-recalls-granola-bars-and-granola-cereals-due-possible-health-risk>
- Herolds Salads, INC., Deli Salads (*Listeria monocytogenes*)
- Nature's Wonder, Mung Bean Sprouts (*Listeria monocytogenes*)
- Fresh Express and Publix, Spinach (*Listeria monocytogenes*)

Previously reported:

- Chef's Line Fire Grilled Chicken Breast (undercooked chicken) by Wayne Farms LLC
- Freshness Guaranteed Chicken Fried Rice Diced Chicken Meat with Vegetables and Rice in a Savory Soy Sauce (*Listeria monocytogenes*) by Garland Ventures LTD
- Cantaloupe Chunks and fruit mixes containing cantaloupe, Cut Fruit Express, Inc, Bix Produce, GHGA, LLC (Sprouts Farmers Market, Trader Joe's) (*Salmonella*)
- Peaches, Nectarines, and Plums Distributed by HMC Farms
- Burn Boot Camp Triple Chocolate Almond Flavored Whey Protein Bars by Doctors Scientific Organica (foreign material)
- Hilltop Meadow Farm Pepper Jack Raw Milk Cheese (*Listeria monocytogenes*)
- Multiple brands of Apple Cinnamon Fruit Puree by Wanabana LLC

For more information on recalls due to undeclared allergens please visit: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts>

Brighten the Holidays by Making Your Health and Safety a Priority

Take these steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy:

1. **Wash hands often to help prevent the spread of germs.** It's flu season. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds.
2. **Bundle up to stay dry and warm.** Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: light, warm layers, gloves, hats, scarves, and waterproof boots.
3. **Manage stress.** Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, and out of control. Some of the best ways to manage stress are to find support, connect socially, and get plenty of sleep.
4. **Don't drink and drive or let others drink and drive.** Whenever anyone drives drunk, they put everyone on the road in danger. Choose not to drink and drive and help others do the same.
5. **Be smoke-free.** Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke. Smokers have greater health risks because of their tobacco use, but nonsmokers also are at risk when exposed to tobacco smoke.
6. **Fasten seat belts while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.** Always buckle your children in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to their height, weight, and age. Buckle up every time, no matter how short the trip and encourage passengers to do the same.
7. **Get exams and screenings.** Ask your health care provider what exams you need and when to get them. Update your personal and family history.
8. **Get your vaccinations.** Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year.
9. **Monitor children.** Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, and other objects out of children's reach. Protect them from drowning, burns, falls, and other potential accidents.
10. **Practice fire safety.** Most residential fires occur during the winter months, so don't leave fireplaces, space heaters, food cooking on stoves, or candles unattended. Have an emergency plan and practice it regularly.
11. **Prepare food safely.** Remember these simple steps: Wash hands and surfaces often, avoid cross-contamination, cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate foods promptly.
12. **Eat healthy, stay active.** Eat fruits and vegetables which pack nutrients and help lower the risk for certain diseases. Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt, and sugar. Also, be active for at least 2½ hours a week and help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

(cdc.gov)

Don't forget to follow Central Connecticut Health District on social media!

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/ccthd4/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CCTHD>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/centralcthealthdistrict/>

The Central Connecticut Health District is committed to improving the quality of life in our communities through prevention of disease and injury, fostering of a healthy environment, and promotion of the health of our residents.