

WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGIST REPORT

April 29, 2024



**Central
Connecticut
Health
District**

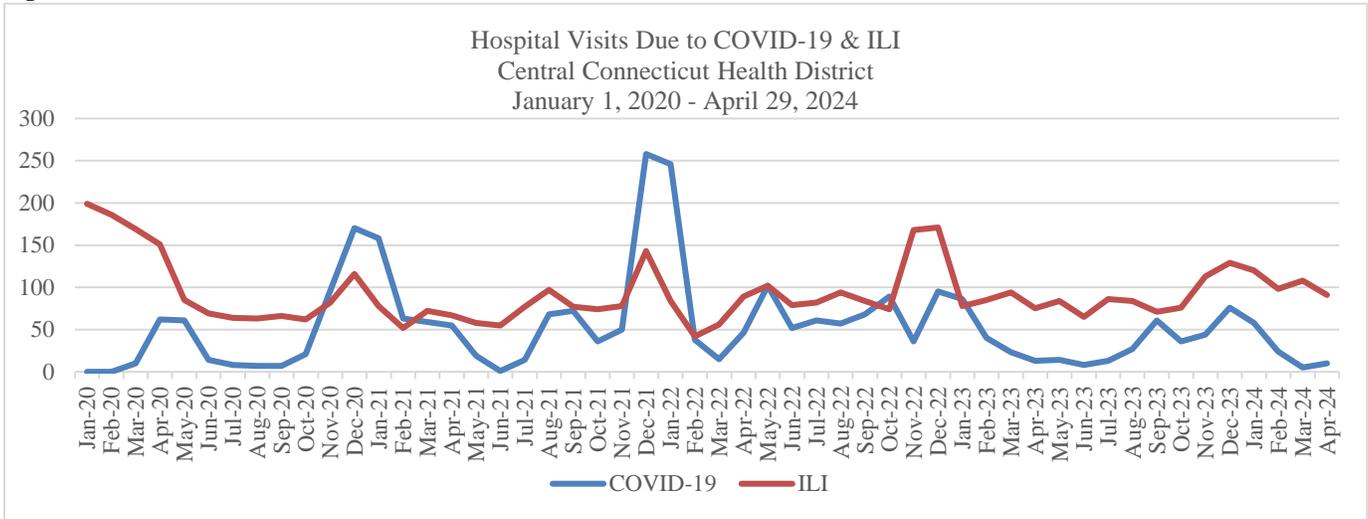
Christine DePierro-Gacek, MAT, MPH
EPIDEMIOLOGIST, Central Connecticut Health District

RESPIRATORY VIRAL SEASON

The month of May will hopefully mark the end of Respiratory Viral Season 2023-2024. CCHD will continue to report on syndromic surveillance for both COVID-19 and Influenza-like Illness.

SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE

CCHD collects syndromic surveillance data from the EpiCenter database. Data for COVID-19 and Influenza-like Illness (ILI) is as of **April 29, 2024**. The line graph to the right illustrates the number of hospital visits due to COVID-19 (those experiencing symptoms with a COVID-19 diagnosis) and those experiencing ILI (having a fever and a cough or sore throat) in our district. It is important to note that other circulating respiratory viruses can present as ILI.



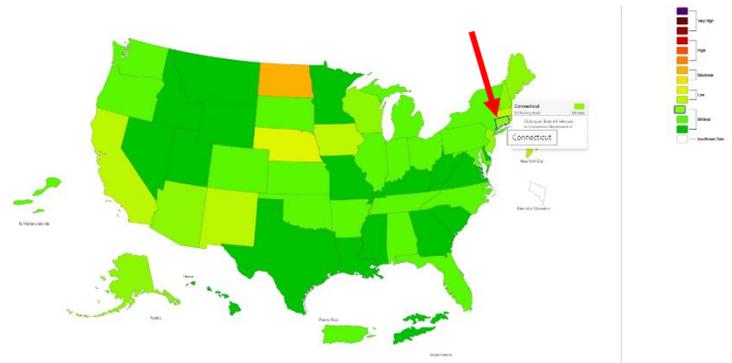
The CDC's Flu View Map shows Connecticut's ILI Activity Level dropped to minimal as of **April 20, 2024**. It looks as though nationally; we are coming to a close in respiratory viral season.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Avian influenza A(H5N1) continues to circulate nationally in wild birds. The risk for HPAI infection in Connecticut is low. Nationally, HPAI has been detected in 34 herds of dairy cattle across 9 states. A federal order requiring

testing of lactating cows being moved between states takes effect today (April 29th). Last week it was reported that viral RNA was found in commercial milk samples sourced from multiple states. The tests confirmed that the virus had been inactivated by pasteurization, meaning it cannot cause infection. It is recommended to avoid consuming unpasteurized milk or raw cheeses, especially from animals with suspected or confirmed HPAI. Unfortunately, some dairy cows can present as asymptomatic and farmers may not be able to determine if a cow is infected or not unless they perform routine testing (which is not plausible). Infected dairy cattle shed the virus in large amounts through their udders. For more information on HPAI please visit:

<https://portal.ct.gov/doag/regulatory/regulatory/avian-influenza-information>



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 the total weekly aggregate tests performed to detect these viruses, and the weekly aggregate positive tests to the CDC; Middlesex and Yale are the only contributing health organizations in Connecticut. They also report the specimen type, location, and week of collection. NREVSS allows for timely analysis of data to monitor viral seasons and circulation patterns. Data from NREVSS was updated **April 25, 2024**.*

Norovirus test positivity remains elevated in the Northeast at 12.2%. Norovirus is the leading cause of vomiting and diarrhea, and foodborne illness in the United States. It appears norovirus activity has persisted for quite some time in the Northeast.

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) test positivity for PCR (7.7%) detection remains slightly elevated. HMPV symptoms include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath. HMPV infection may progress to bronchitis or pneumonia and are like other viruses that cause upper and lower respiratory infections.

HPIV Type 3 antigen detection and PCR detection percent positivity have slightly elevated to 7.018 % and 6.211% respectively. Symptoms are that of a common cold and may include fever, runny nose, cough, sneezing, sore throat, ear pain, irritability, or decreased appetite. HPIV-3 is more often associated with bronchiolitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

Rotavirus antigen detection in the Northeast is elevated- 20 % of the specimens sent to the CDC for testing were positive for the rotavirus antigen. [Rotavirus](#) is characterized by vomiting and watery diarrhea for three to eight days. Children may develop rotavirus disease more than once because neither vaccine nor natural infection provide full immunity from future infections.

MEASLES

As of **April 25, 2024**, a total of 128 measles cases (+3 since last reporting period) were reported in 20 States (AZ, CA, FL, GA, IL, IN, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NJ, NY, NYC, OH, PA, VA, VT, WA, & WV) since January 1, 2024. Vermont and West Virginia recently reported cases in their States. Of the 128 cases, 70 (55%) have been hospitalized for isolation or management of measles complications. 81% of the cases were unvaccinated or had an unknown vaccination status; while 13% only received one dose of MMR vaccine previously and 5% received the full series (two doses).

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can lead to serious health complications. Measles is a vaccine preventable disease. If you are unsure of your vaccination status, contact your doctor or go to the State of Connecticut's Immunization Information System to access your vaccine records at www.ctwizpublicportal.dph.ct.gov . If you need help getting you or a family member up-to-date with vaccinations, please contact (860)785-8380 x 216. For more information on measles please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

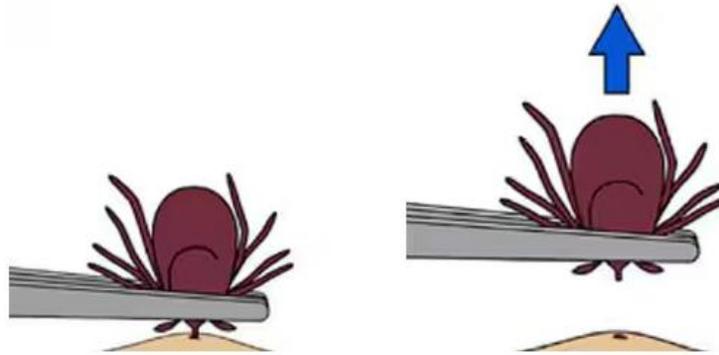
PREVENTION

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,
- Frequently clean and disinfect high touch surfaces,
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, and
- Stay hydrated.

TICK-BORNE DISEASES

Ticks are out and ready to eat! If you happen to find a tick attached to your skin, remove the tick as soon as possible with clean, fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Pull upward with steady and even pressure (don't twist or jerk the tick- you want to make sure you remove the mouth-parts with the tweezers). After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water. Do not crush the tick with your fingers. You can put the tick in a sealed bag and submit to CCHD for identification and testing. We are already receiving tick submissions for testing from residents. Please visit <https://www.ccthd.org/vectorbornedisease> to find out how to submit ticks to us for testing.



Please follow up with your primary care provider if you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing the tick.



Avoid folklore remedies such as “painting” the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. Your goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible—not waiting for it to detach.

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:

- Tama Corporation is recalling Queso de Mano PAISA due to contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*
 - *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacterium that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. *Listeria* infection may cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women.
 - Queso de Mano Paisa was only sold in Utah at Rancho Markets stores

Previously reported:

- ‘Infinite Herbs,’ and ‘Melissa’s’ Fresh Organic Basil, by Infinite Herbs, LLC due to the potential to be contaminated with *Salmonella*
 - This product was shipped directly to Trader Joe’s retail distribution centers in Connecticut (FL, IL, PA, VA, & MA too)
- Eva Nutrition, Science of Alpha, Niwali, NWL Nutra Tejocote Dietary Supplements by Global Mix, Inc due to containing toxic yellow oleander.
- Helados Mexico, mango bars in the variety pack by Tropicale Foods due to the potential to be contaminated with *Salmonella*.
- Trader Joes Nuts- 50% Less Sodium Roasted and Salted Whole Cashews by Wenders LLC due to potential contamination with *Salmonella*.

For more information on recalls due to food with undeclared allergens, drugs, nutritional/dietary supplements or medical devices please visit: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts>

Do not 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.