

January 26, 2024

Key Takeaways

- Respiratory illness rates continue to decrease but remain elevated. This marks the third consecutive week of decreasing ED diagnoses rates for COVID-19, flu, and RSV. Overall rates are still well above annual averages for all three respiratory viruses.
- Hospitalizations for COVID-19 and flu decrease. COVID-19 admissions levels are now classified as “low”. Hospital bed occupancy remains “moderate” per CDC standards. CDC models suggest a continued decrease in hospitalizations for both viruses.
- Norovirus detections in Virginia decreased 16% since the end of 2023.
- Environmental and technological threats highlight global risks over the next decade. This is according to the WEF’s 2024 Global Risk Report.
- Since December 1, 2023, the CDC has been notified of 23 confirmed U.S. cases of measles. This includes seven direct importations of measles by international travelers and two outbreaks of more than five cases each.

Key Figures

COVID-19

Low

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 hospital admissions as of Jan 20.

Moderate

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 hospital occupancy as of Jan 20.

0% / 25%

Population in localities with “High” / “Medium” COVID-19 hospital admissions levels as of Jan 20.

Influenza

High

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Jan 20.

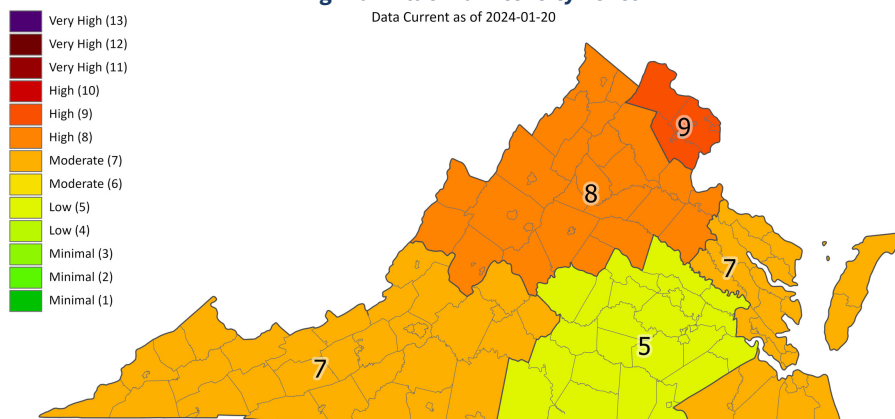
2 of 5

Virginia regions with High influenza intensity levels, as of Jan 20.

Spotlight: Global Risks

Virginia Influenza Intensity Level

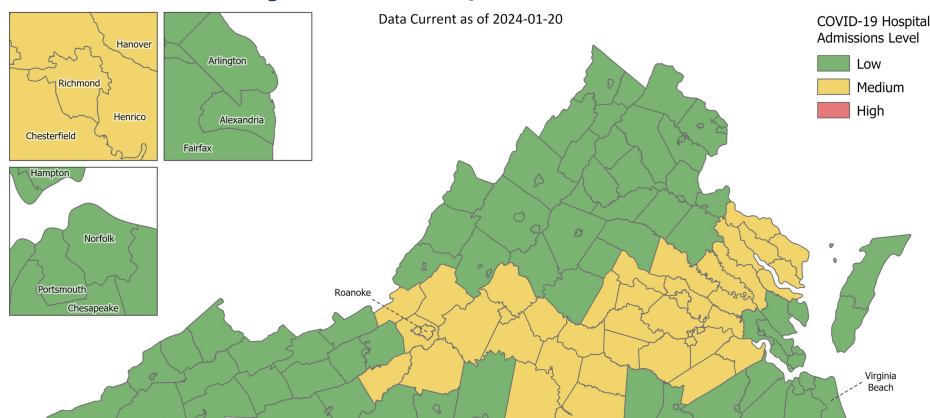
Data Current as of 2024-01-20



Data Source: [VDH](#).

Virginia COVID-19 Hospital Admissions Level

Data Current as of 2024-01-20

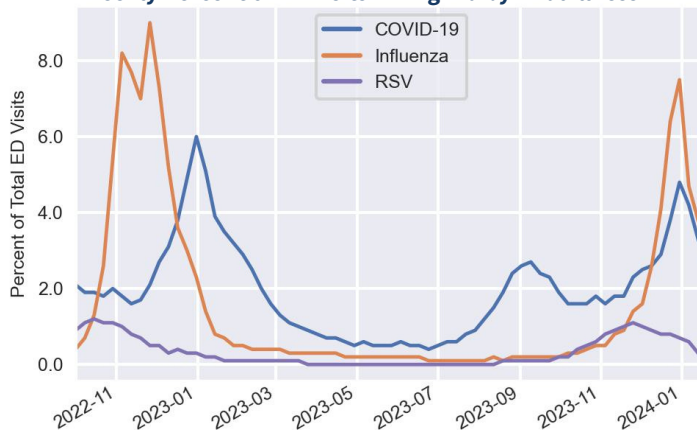


Data Source: [CDC](#).

Seasonal Illness

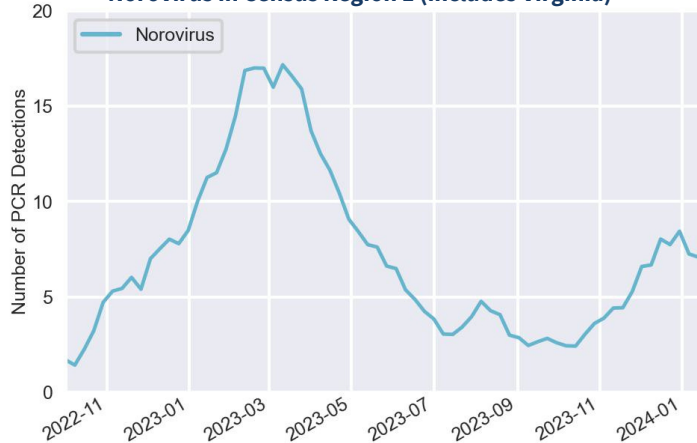
- **Respiratory illness rates continue to decrease.** Statewide emergency department (ED) diagnoses rates for COVID-19 and flu have now declined for four weeks in a row. RSV diagnoses in Virginian EDs have decreased since the start of December. COVID-19 wastewater viral activity has stabilized and is notably lower than it was at the end of December.
- **Respiratory illness season is not over.** Despite the recent decreases, disease rates remain elevated. The statewide flu intensity level is still considered “high”. ED diagnoses of flu are still significantly elevated. COVID-19 wastewater levels and ED diagnoses are also still near seasonal highs.
- **Flu and COVID-19 hospitalizations decrease again.** After four weeks of continued declines, COVID-19 hospitalizations have decreased by more than 32% since December. Flu hospitalizations have decreased by 58% over the same time. Though both rates are still substantially higher than annual averages, models suggest a slow decline for both.
- **JN.1 variant continues to out-compete peers.** The variant now accounts for an estimated 85% of new COVID-19 cases in HHS Region 3 (including Virginia).
- **Norovirus detections slowly decreasing in Virginia.** The virus continues to cause sporadic foodborne outbreaks. Despite this, community detection rates continue to decline in the local census region.

Weekly Percent of ED Visits in Virginia by Viral Illness



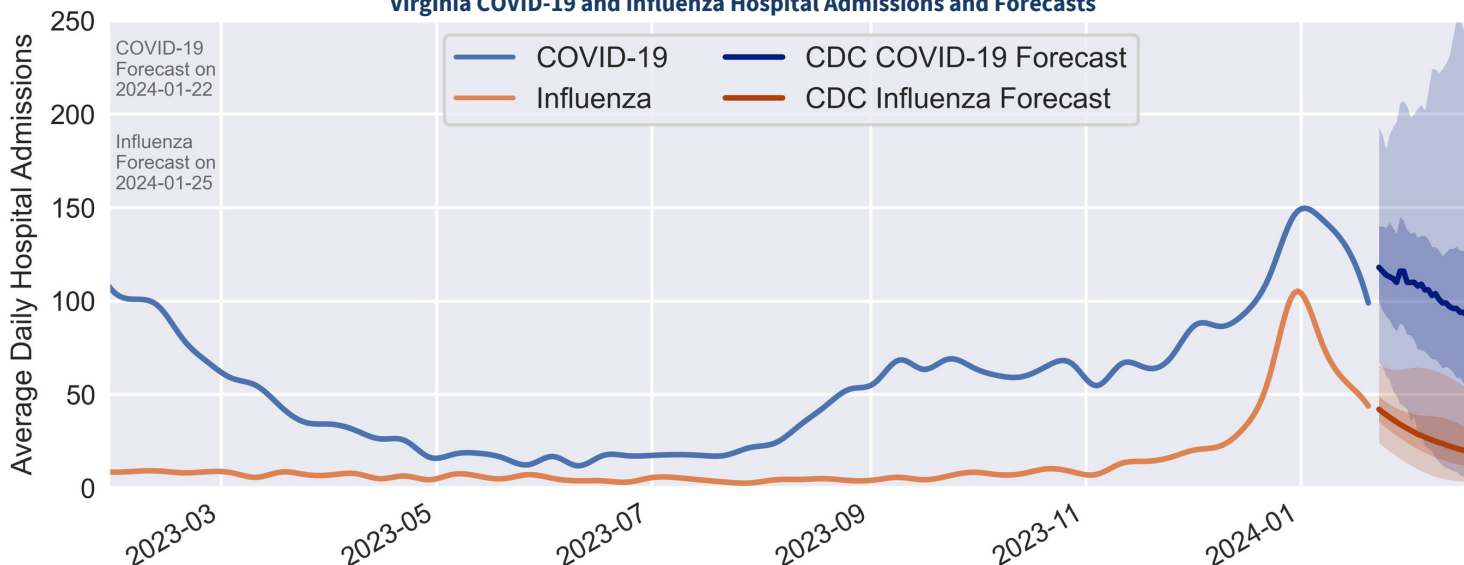
Rates for all three respiratory viruses are decreasing. Data Source: [CDC](#).

Norovirus in Census Region 1 (includes Virginia)



Norovirus detections continue to decline slowly. Data Source: [CDC](#).

Virginia COVID-19 and Influenza Hospital Admissions and Forecasts



Models suggest a continued decrease of hospitalizations for both flu and COVID-19. Note, 50% and 95% confidence intervals shown as shading. Historical data source: [HealthData.gov](#), COVID-19 forecast data source: [CDC CFA](#), flu forecast data source: [CDC FluSight](#).

Spotlight

Global Risks



The [World Economic Forum](#) released its [2024 Global Risk Report](#), based on its Global Risks Perception Survey of 1,490 international experts. Experts see a mix of threats in the 2-year time horizon, while environmental and technological threats highlight risks over the next decade. Separately, the [Bulletin of Atomic Scientists](#) set their [Doomsday Clock](#) to 90 seconds to midnight. The clock, which represents the likelihood of human-made global catastrophe, is the closest it has been to midnight in its 78-year history, driven by nuclear risks, climate change, biological threats, and disruptive technologies.

Image Source: [WEF 2024 Global Risk Report](#)

Other News

- **Memphis issued a [boil water notice](#) to 600,000 residents last Thursday.** The advisory was lifted on January 23, after crews worked to restore low pressure and fix burst pipes resulting from freezing conditions. The state's Emergency Management Agency reported that 28 other systems were also under boil water advisories, while the Tennessee Department of Health reported 34 weather-related fatalities.
- **Since December 1, 2023, the CDC has been notified of [23 confirmed U.S. cases](#) of measles, including seven direct importations of measles by international travelers** and two outbreaks with more than five cases each. Health officials in Phoenix, Arizona also cite concerns about a possible outbreak given the area's [sub-optimal vaccination rate](#) of 89% among students in kindergarten.
- **The American Red Cross has declared an emergency blood shortage.** The organization has reported that the [number of donors has decreased](#) by over 40% over the last two decades and experienced a 7000-unit shortfall during the last week of 2023.
- **Diesel fuel spillage in Cuyahoga River in Cleveland prompts the deployment of HAZMAT crews.** The [100-gallon spill](#) originated from the Sherwin-Williams manufacturing plant where a generator spilled the fuel into a storm drain. Up to 90% of the spilled fuel is expected to be recovered.
- **[Malaria vaccine campaign](#) launched in Cameroon.** Prior to the launch, the country received doses of the GSK-manufactured vaccine through a pilot program in November 2023. The country will now broadly offer the vaccine, which has a four-dose schedule, to all children at least six months of age as of December 31, 2023.