RESPIRATORY WATCH

Week 51-52 (December 15, 2024 to December 28, 2024)

Highlights of this reporting period[1]

The 2024-2025 season runs from August 25, 2024 to August 29, 2025

Activity levels[2]

- The reporting period covers two weeks of respiratory activity (December 15, 2024, to December 28, 2024)
- Influenza activity remained stable in week 51 (N=28) but saw an increase in week 52 (N=73) compared to week 50 (N=28).
  - The number of PCR positive cases in this reporting period was lower than the number in the same reporting period in the 2023/24 season (week 51: N=133, week 52: N=183).
- COVID-19 activity increased in week 51 (N=151) but decreased in week 52 (N=124) compared to week 50 (N=110).
  - The number of PCR positive cases in this reporting period was lower than the number in the same reporting period in the 2023/24 season (week 51: N=298, week 52: N=276).
- RSV activity increased during week 51 (N=91) and week 52 (N=138) compared to the previous reporting week 50 (N=57).
  - The number of PCR-positive cases in week 51 was lower than in the same week of the 2023/24 season, while the number in week 52 was higher (week 51: N=128, week 52: N=122).

Influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity during this reporting period and the 2024/25 season

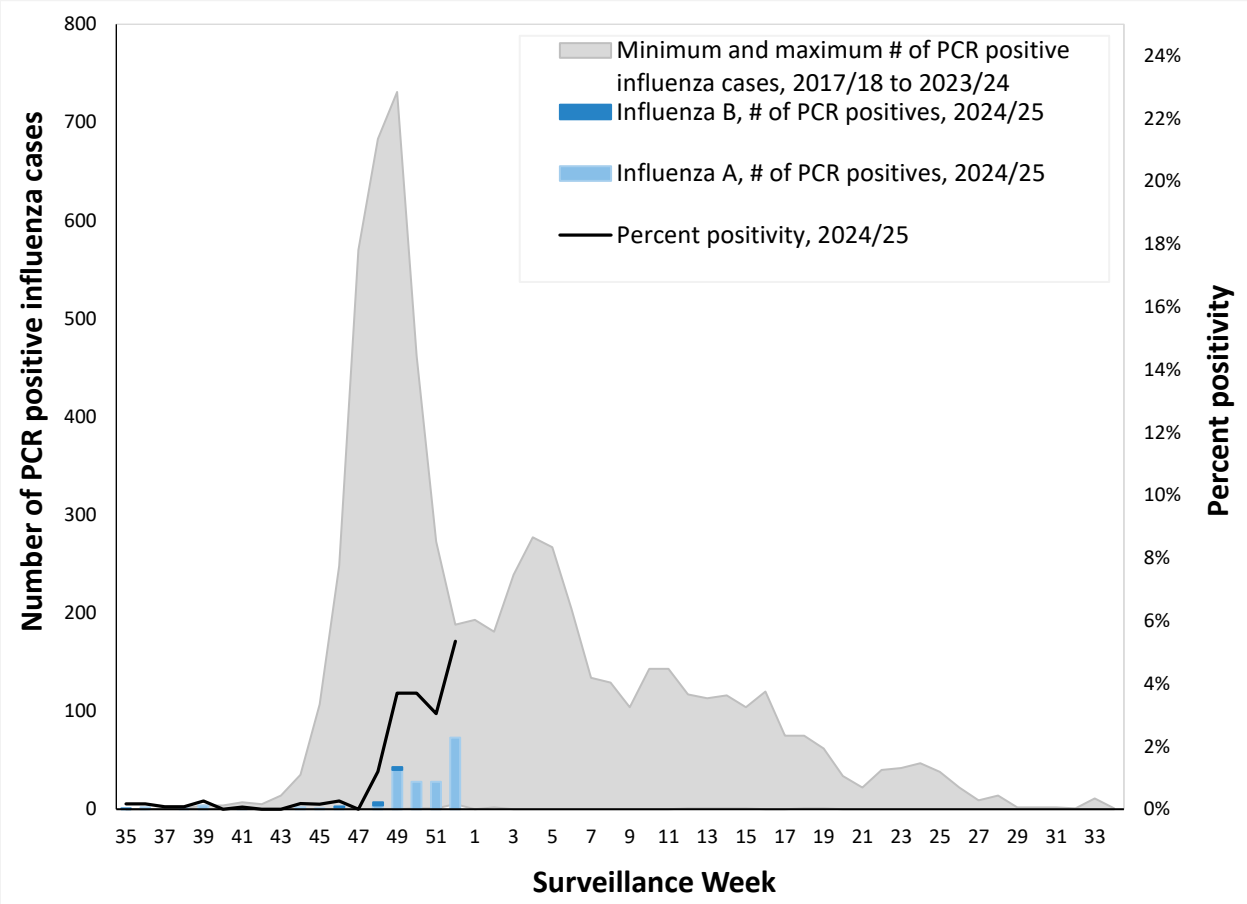
	Influenza		COVID-19		RSV	
	This reporting period[3]	2024/25 season	This reporting period[3]	2024/25 season	This reporting period[3]	2024/25 season
Laboratory testing						
New laboratory-confirmed cases	101	194	275	2893	229	387
Percent positivity (%)[4]	4.2	-	10.4	-	9.2	-
Severe outcome[5]						
Hospitalizations (non-ICU)	16	33	0	387		
ICU admissions	4	4	0	39		
Deaths	1	1	0	44		
Outbreaks[6]						
Acute-care facility	0	0	1	22	0	1
Long-term care facility	0	0	6	94	6	6

ILI activity	During this reporting period, the percentage of emergency room visits for influenza like illness (ILI) was 0.9% and 1.7% for week 51 and week 52 respectively.

[1] See data notes in Appendix.
[2] Use of multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) respiratory virus testing may affect the number of tests conducted and number of cases identified and reported.
[3] Reporting period covers two weeks of respiratory activity (December 15, 2024, to December 28, 2024).
[4] Percent positivity is useful for understanding current pathogen spread in the community.
[5] New hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths in recent surveillance weeks may be undercounted because of reporting delays. Outcomes are not reported for RSV because it is not a notifiable condition in Nova Scotia.
[6] Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Influenza

Figure 1: Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases (N=194) and percent positivity by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia[7]



[7] Minimum is zero during reporting weeks with no positive specimen in seasons 2019/20 to 2023/24. There were no influenza cases reported during the 2020-2021 season.

Table 1: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by zone, Nova Scotia[8]

Zone	Current reporting period			Cumulative (2024/25)		
	Influenza A	Influenza B	Total	Influenza A	Influenza B	Total
Western	13	0	**13**	18	0	**18**
Northern	36	0	**36**	50	2	**52**
Eastern	7	0	**7**	13	1	**14**
Central	45	0	**45**	105	5	**110**
Nova Scotia Total	**101**	**0**	**101**	**186**	**8**	**194**

Table 2: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by age groups, Nova Scotia[8]

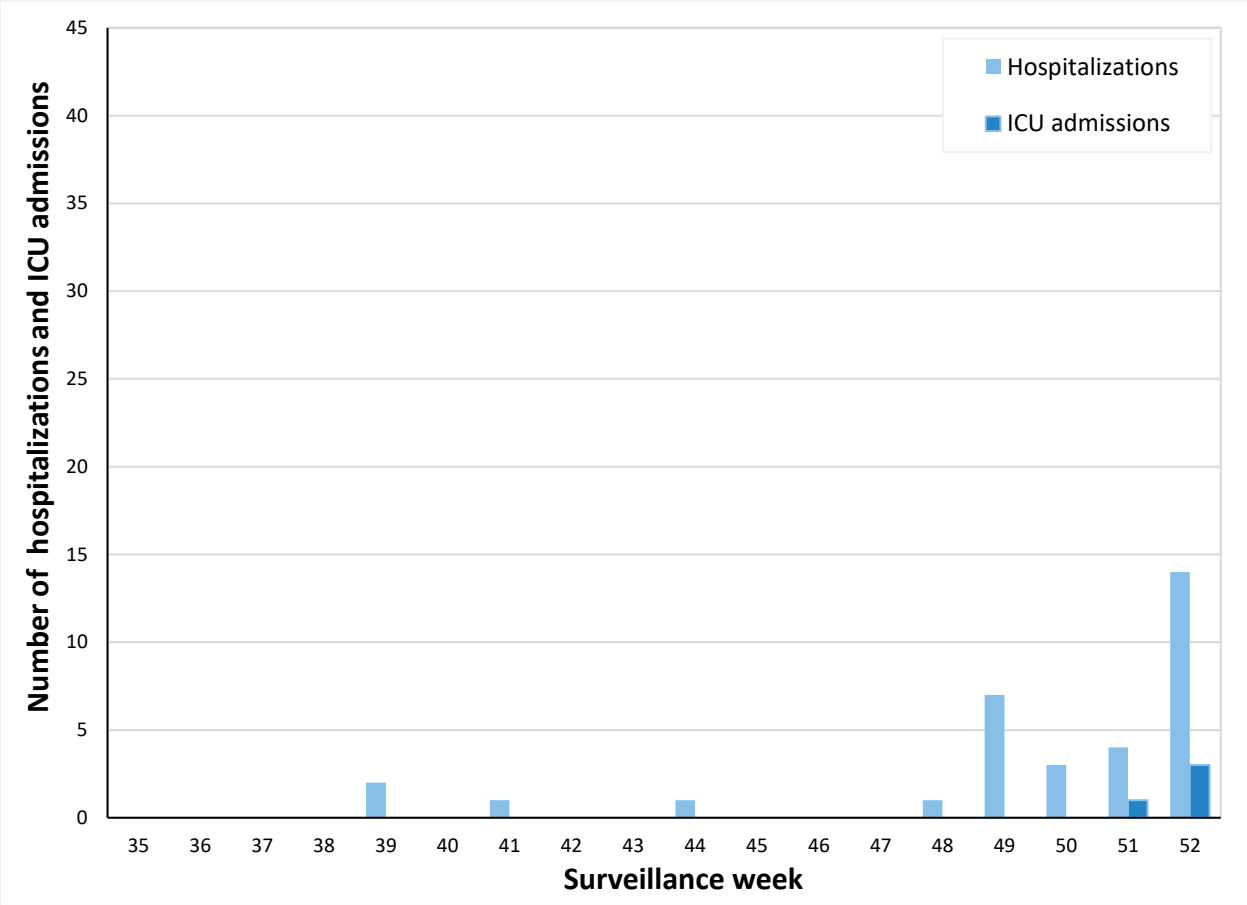
Age group (years)	Current reporting period			Cumulative (2024/25)		
	Influenza A	Influenza B	Total	Influenza A	Influenza B	Total
0-4	8	0	**8**	17	0	**17**
5-19	10	0	**10**	17	4	**21**
20-44	20	0	**20**	41	1	**42**
45-64	37	0	**37**	55	2	**57**
≥ 65	26	0	**26**	56	1	**57**
Nova Scotia Total	**101**	**0**	**101**	**186**	**8**	**194**

Table 3: Cumulative number of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths among lab-confirmed influenza positive patients, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[9]

Age group (years)	Cumulative (2024/25)		
	Hospitalizations	ICU	Deaths
0-4	4	0	0
5-19	3	0	0
20-44	1	0	0
45-64	10	1	0
≥ 65	15	3	1
Nova Scotia Total	**33**	**4**	**1**

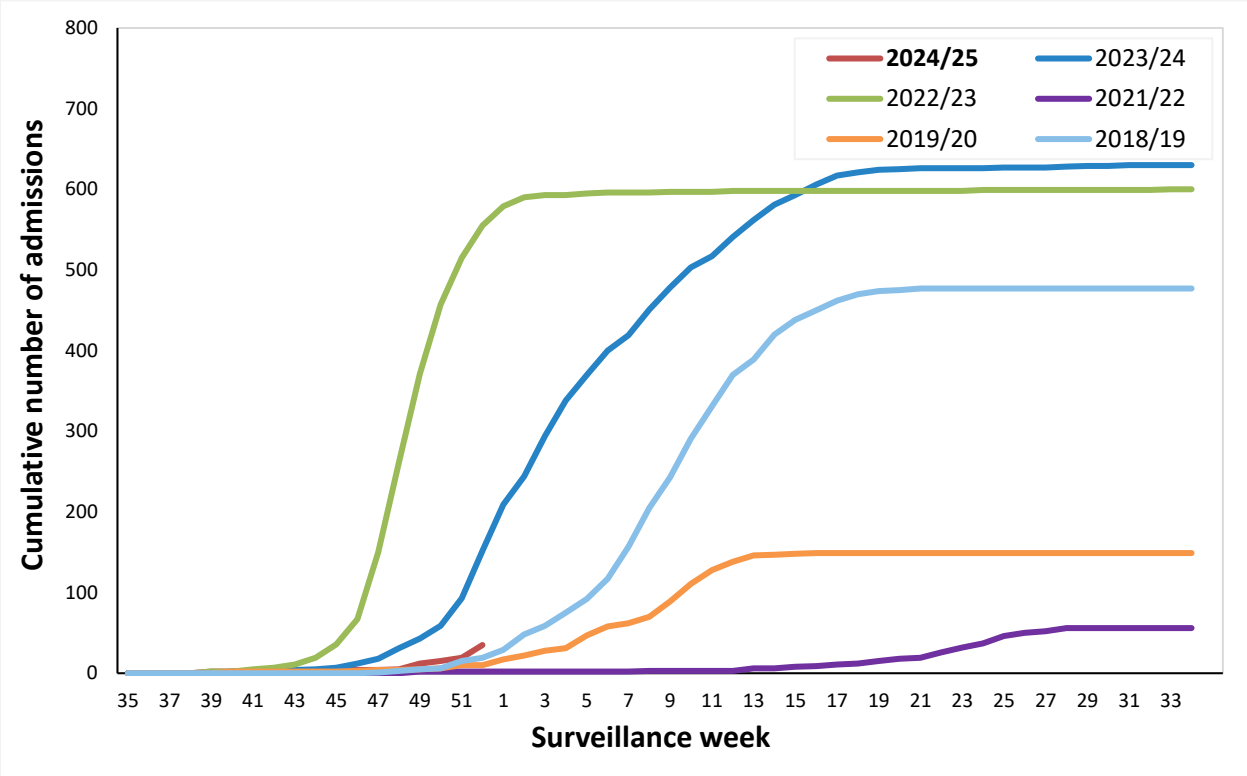
[8] Local public health continuously enters and updates influenza case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.
[9] Individuals may be included in multiple columns if they have more than one severe outcome (i.e., categories are not mutually exclusive). Recent hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Figure 2: Number of influenza hospitalizations and ICU admissions by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[10]



[10] Cases who are hospitalized and admitted to the ICU in the same surveillance week will be included in both the hospitalization and ICU counts for that surveillance week. Recent hospitalizations and ICU admissions may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Figure 3: Cumulative number of hospitalizations and ICU admissions for influenza by surveillance week, 2024/25 season compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia[11]



[11] Figure 3 presents the cumulative number of cases who were admitted to hospital and/or ICU during the season. Cases are counted once. There were no reported cases of influenza during the 2020-2021 season.

COVID-19

Figure 4: Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases (N=2893) and percent positivity, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia

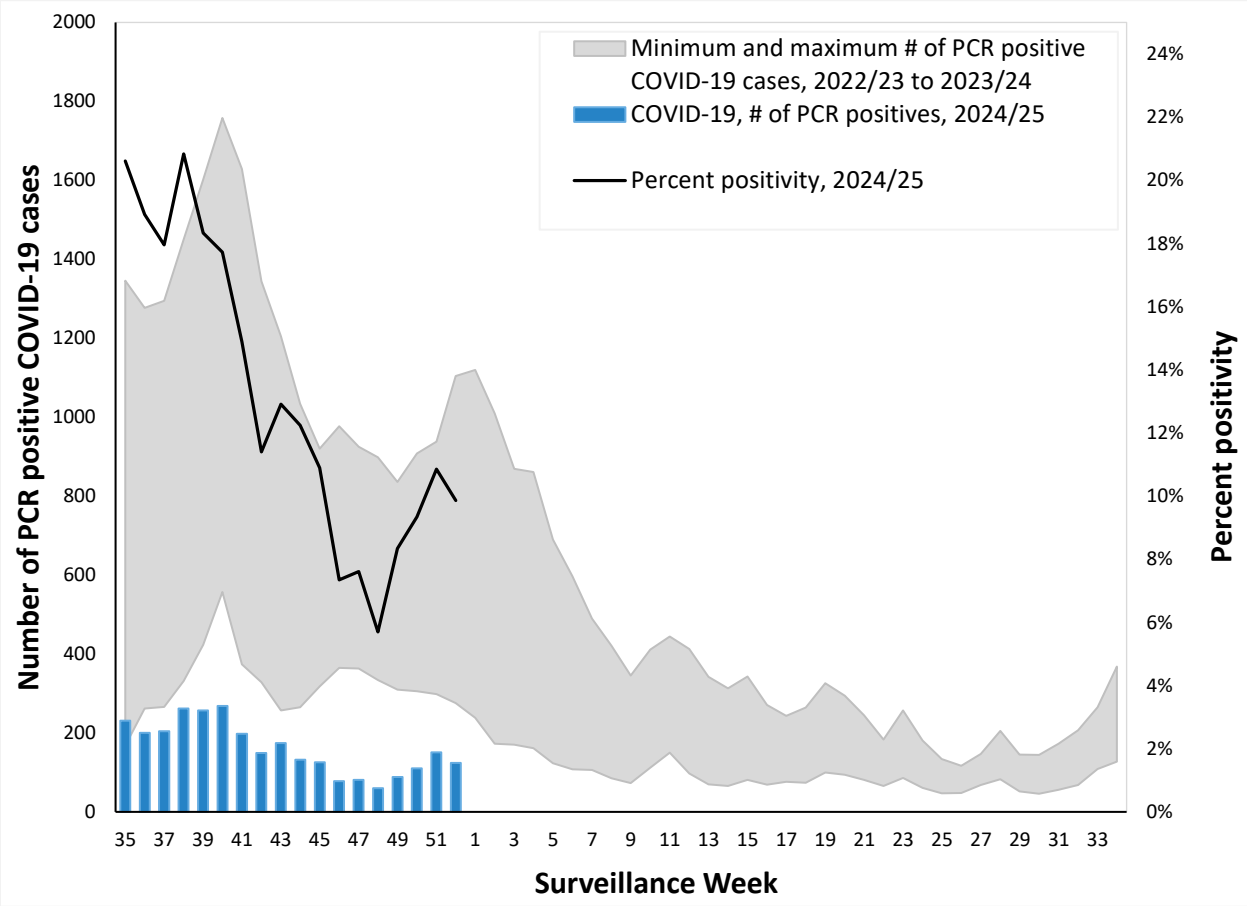


Table 4: Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by zone, Nova Scotia[12]

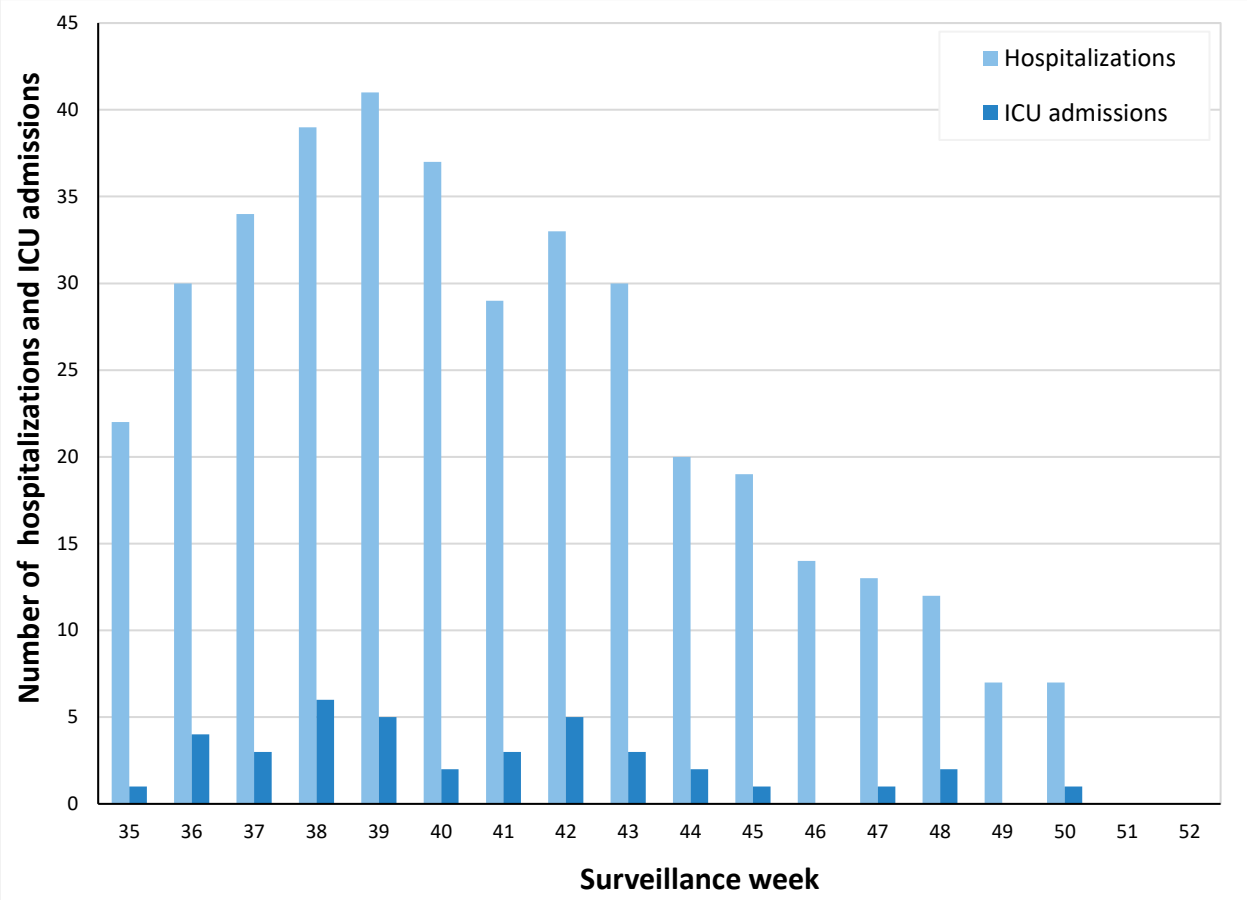
Zone	Current reporting period	Cumulative (2024/25)
Western	76	617
Northern	79	683
Eastern	45	505
Central	75	1088
Nova Scotia Total	**275**	**2893**

[12] Local public health continuously enters and updates COVID-19 case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Table 5. Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by age group, Nova Scotia[13]

Age group (years)	Current reporting period	Cumulative (2024/25)
0-4	5	54
5-19	3	63
20-44	25	317
45-64	38	472
≥ 65	204	1987
Nova Scotia Total	**275**	**2893**

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions by week, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[14]

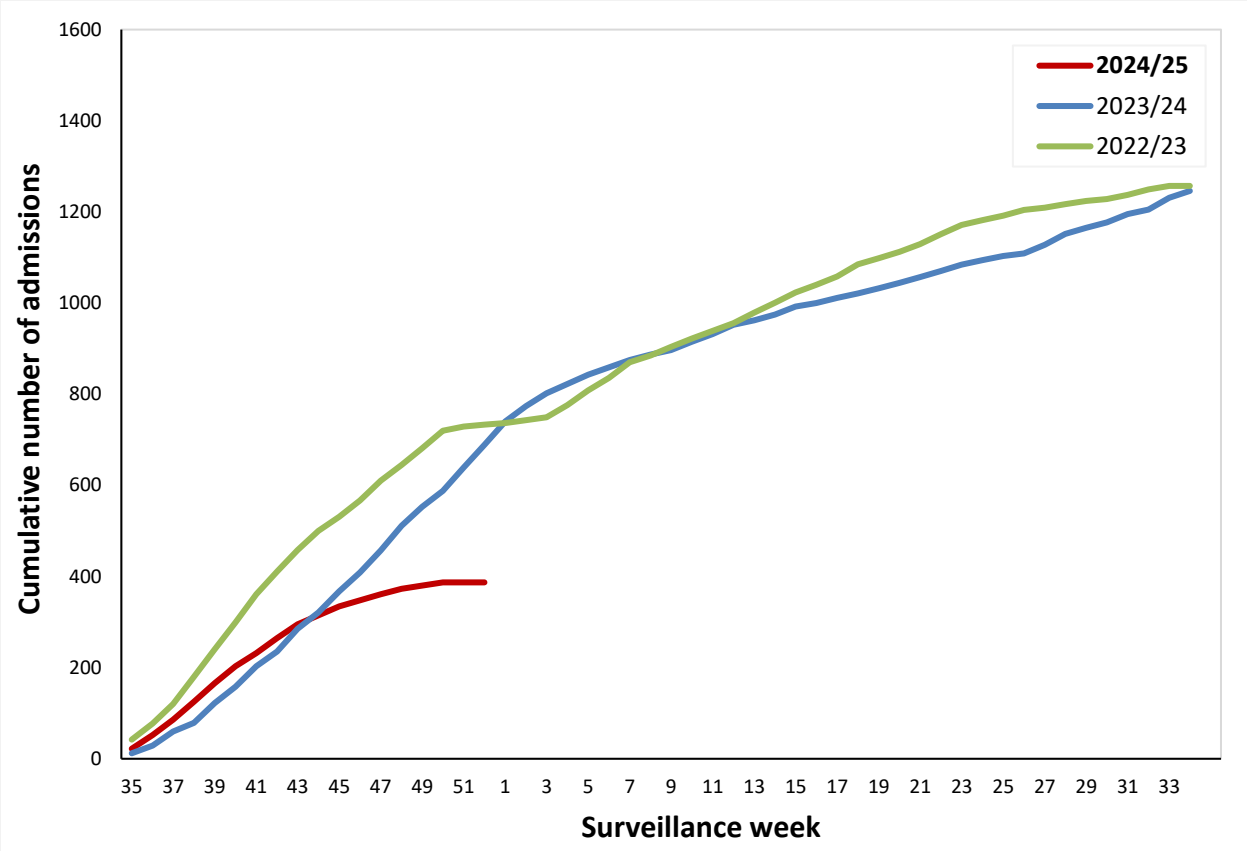


[13] Local public health continuously enters and updates COVID-19 case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.
[14] Cases who are hospitalized and admitted to the ICU in the same surveillance week will be included in both the hospitalization and ICU counts for that surveillance week. Recent hospitalizations and ICU admissions may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Table 6: Cumulative number of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths among COVID-19 positive patients, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[15]

Age group (years)	Cumulative (2024/25)		
	Hospitalizations	ICU admissions	Deaths
0-4	4	0	0
5-19	1	0	0
20-44	10	0	0
45-64	37	11	4
≥ 65	335	28	40
Nova Scotia Total	**387**	**39**	**44**

Figure 6: Cumulative number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions, by surveillance week, 2024/25 season compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia[16]



[15] Cases can have more than one severe outcome (e.g., be hospitalized and then admitted to the ICU); therefore, cases may be counted multiple times if they have more than one severe outcome (i.e., categories are not mutually exclusive). Recent hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may be undercounted due to delays in reporting

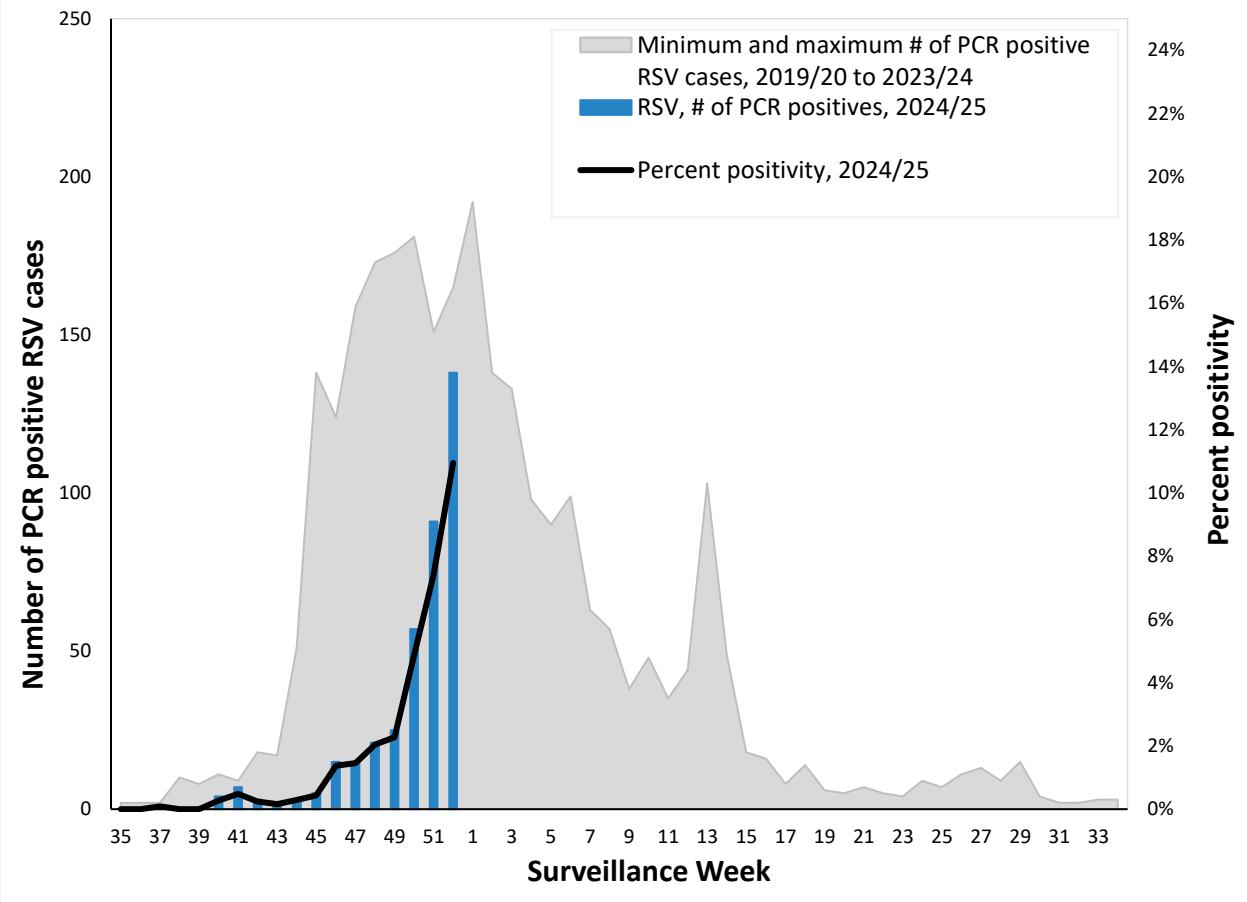
[16] Figure 6 presents the cumulative number of cases who were admitted to hospital and/or ICU during the season. Cases are counted once.

RSV Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) [17]

Table 7: Number of laboratory-confirmed RSV cases by age group, current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia

Age group	Current reporting period	Cumulative (2024/25)
0-5 months	25	43
6-11 months	15	28
12-23 months	38	73
2-4 years	37	71
5-19 years	34	50
20-64 years	26	49
≥ 65 years	54	73
Nova Scotia Total	**229**	**387**

Figure 7: Laboratory-confirmed RSV cases (N=387) by week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia[18]

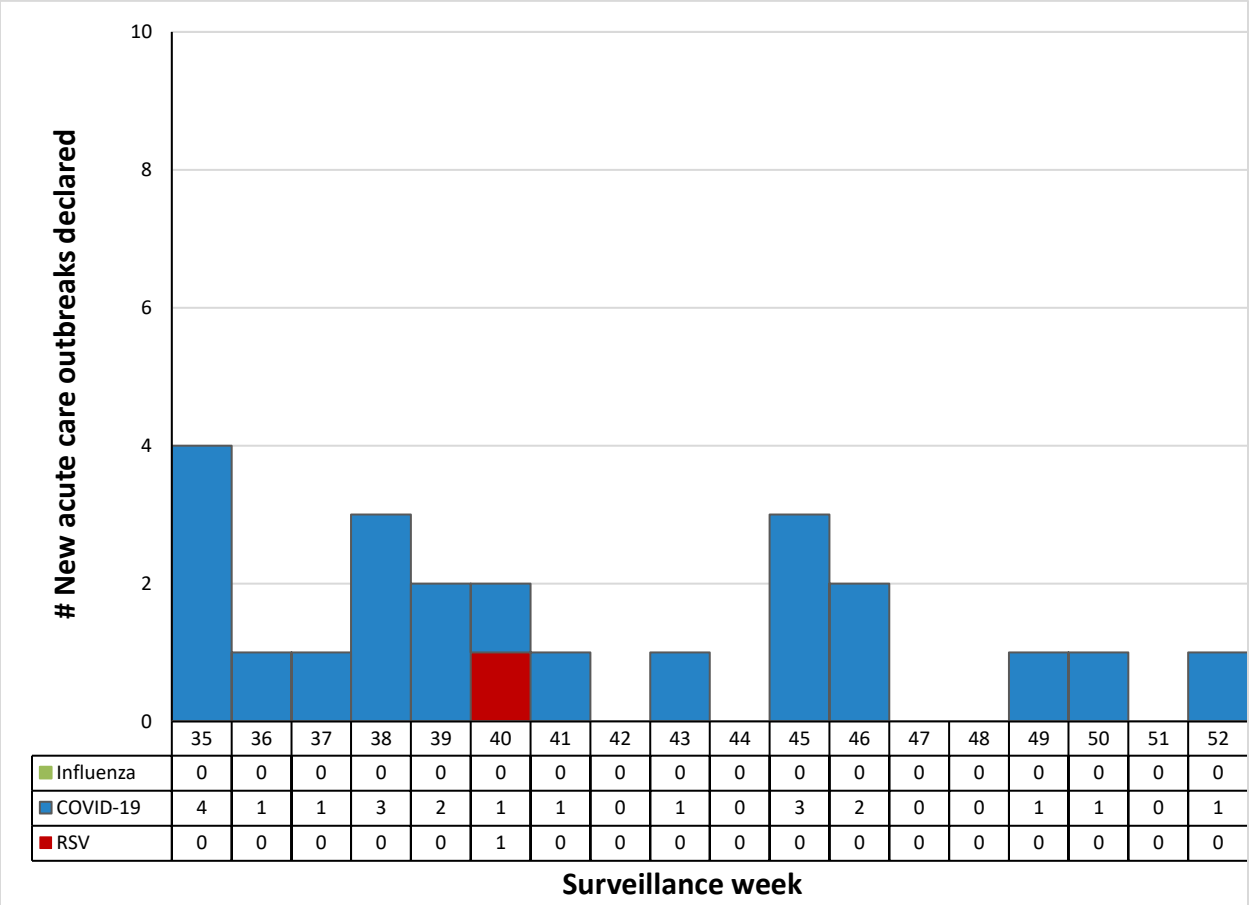


[17] RSV is not a notifiable condition in Nova Scotia

[18] There were no reported RSV cases during the 2020-2021 season. The implementation of the multiplex respiratory virus PCR testing in 2022/23 may increase the number of cases detected.

Respiratory Outbreaks

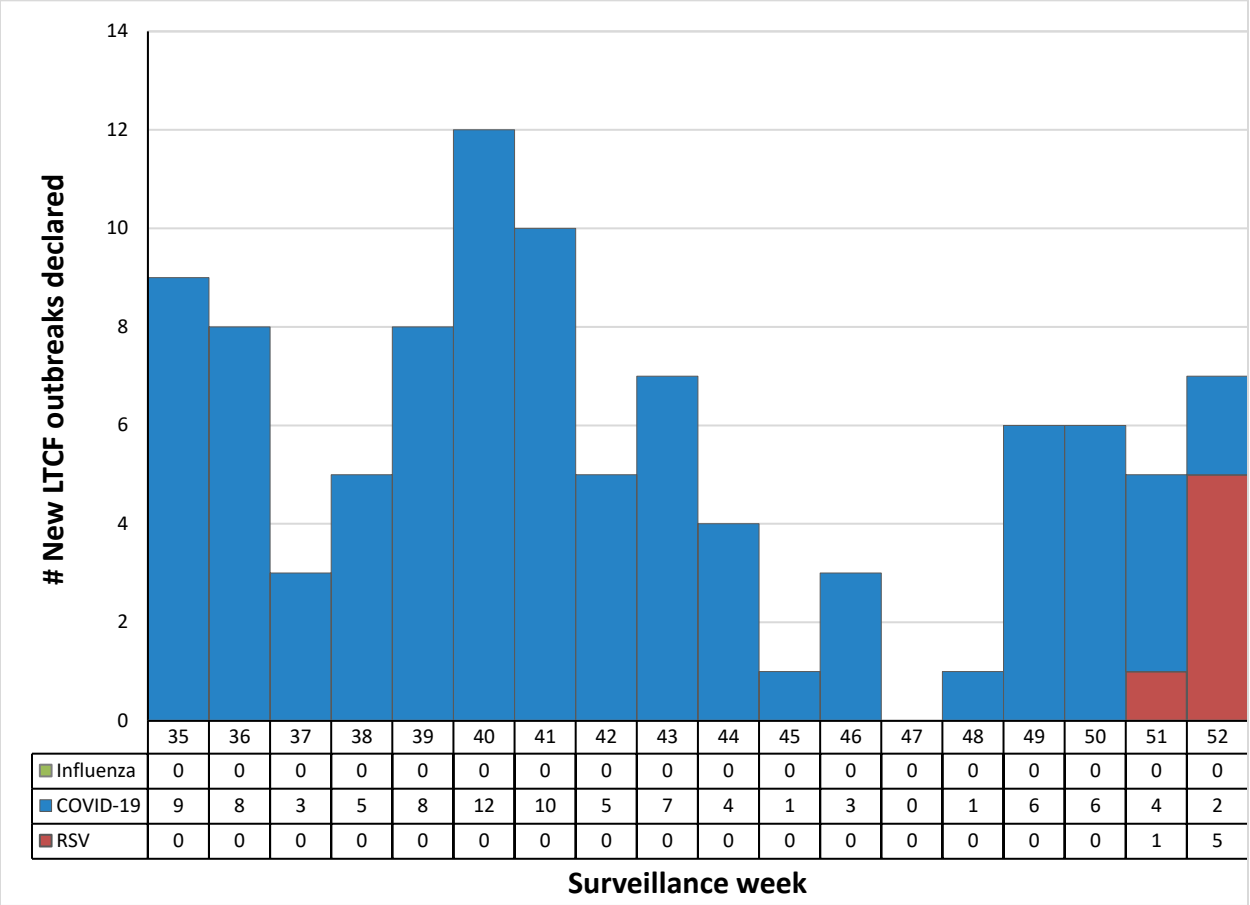
Figure 8. Number of new acute care facility respiratory outbreaks by surveillance week and respiratory virus (influenza, COVID-19 and RSV), 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[19]



	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
Influenza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COVID-19	4	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	1	0	1
RSV	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[19] Acute care facility outbreak definitions are described in the Appendix. Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Figure 9. Number of new long-term care facility (LTCF) respiratory outbreaks by surveillance week and respiratory virus (influenza, COVID-19 and RSV), 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[20]

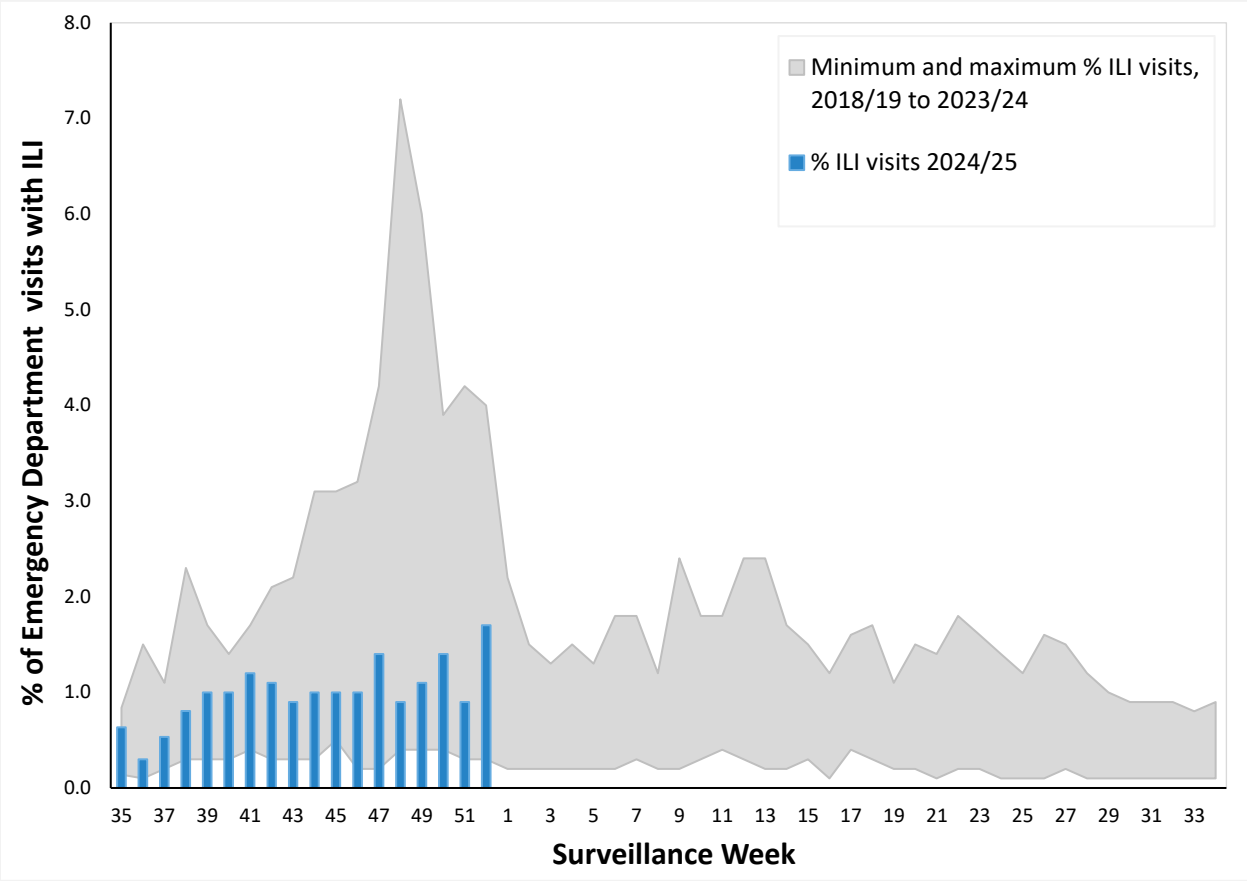


	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
Influenza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COVID-19	9	8	3	5	8	12	10	5	7	4	1	3	0	1	6	6	4	2
RSV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5

[20] LTCF outbreak definitions are described in the Appendix. Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Syndromic Surveillance

Figure 10: Percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia[21]



Other Respiratory Illness

Table 8: Number of positive specimens for other respiratory viruses, current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia[22]

PATHOGEN	Current reporting period	Cumulative (2024/25)
Adenovirus	7	24
Bocavirus	0	1
Coronavirus*	7	15
Enterovirus/Rhinovirus	18	220
Metapneumovirus	0	0
Parainfluenza	7	14

**Excludes COVID-19*

[21] ILI percentages may be updated due to delays in reporting, as some acute care facilities may submit data retrospectively.

[22] Counts may differ from previous weeks because of delays in reporting.

Appendix – data notes and definitions

Data Notes

- A surveillance week runs from Sunday to Saturday. Nova Scotia's 2024/25 season aligns with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) FluWatch surveillance weeks.
    - This year runs from August 25, 2024 (Week 35) to August 29, 2025 (Week 34).
- Notifications of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may lag by several weeks, and deaths are particularly affected. Additionally, data are incomplete for the most recent reporting period because local public health report COVID-19 and influenza outcomes. Figures presenting outcomes by week do not include data for the most recent surveillance week.
- Definitions for hospitalizations and deaths related to each of COVID-19 and influenza were changed in August 2024. These case definitions are found in the Surveillance guidelines.
- RSV is not a notifiable disease in Nova Scotia.
- Testing eligibility guidelines and the use of multiplex PCR testing affect the number of cases identified and reported.
    - A multiplex PCR tests for multiple respiratory pathogens simultaneously. Routine multiplex PCR tests include, but is not limited to, influenza, RSV, and COVID-19. See Nova Scotia's Respiratory Surveillance Plan for a full list of what is tested.
    - In the 2022-2023 season, access to multiplex PCR testing in Nova Scotia increased testing accessibility which likely increased detection in community influenza and RSV.
    - Testing is limited to specific populations and the counts reported in this report under-represent the actual number of cases in the community.

Definitions used in respiratory surveillance, and useful links, 2024/25

See: Nova Scotia's Respiratory Response Plan and Nova Scotia's Respiratory Surveillance Plan for Public Health

Acronyms

ICU Intensive care unit
ILI Influenza-like illness
RSV Respiratory syncytial virus
PCR Polymerase chain reaction
LTCF Long term care facilities

Outbreak Definitions

Pathogen	Acute care facility	Long-term care facility (LCTF)
Influenza	≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of influenza, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a **7-day period**	≥ 2 resident cases of ILI (influenza-like illness), where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of influenza, within the LTCF in a **7-day period**
COVID-19	≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a **10-day period**	≥ 2 laboratory-confirmed resident cases AND at least one is a facility acquired case, with all cases epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a **10-day period**

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of RSV, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a **7-day period**	≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of RSV, epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a **7-day period**

ILI Case Definition

Acute onset of respiratory illness with fever and cough and with one or more of the following – sore throat, arthralgia, myalgia or prostration which is likely due to influenza. In children under 5, gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present. In patients < 5 or ≥ 65 years, fever may not be prominent.

Other case definitions

See: Surveillance Guidelines | novascotia.ca

Links to other weekly influenza reports

Canada: Weekly influenza reports - Canada.ca
World: Global Influenza Programme (who.int)
US: FluView | FluView | CDC