



Huron County Public Health

March 18, 2024

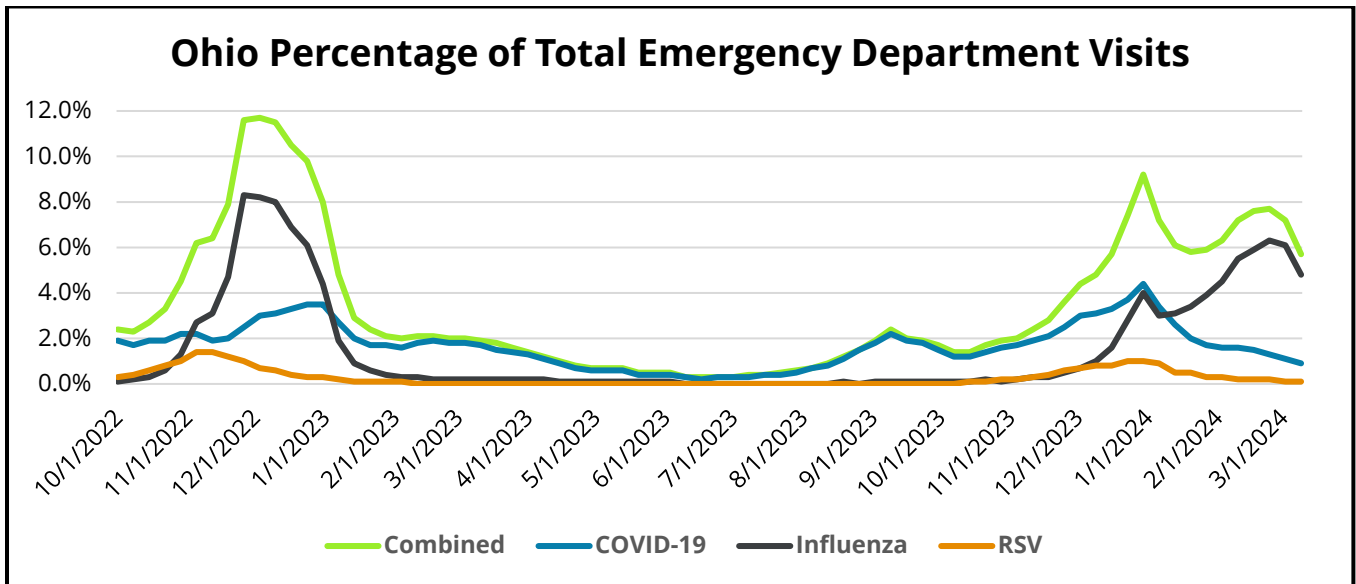
HURON COUNTY RESPIRATORY ILLNESS REPORT

REPORT SUMMARY

It is common to get sick from respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, influenza (flu), and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), especially in the fall and winter months in Ohio. This report is compiled by Huron County Public Health (HCPH) weekly to help residents better understand the current spread of respiratory illnesses in Huron County, Ohio so that they can make informed decisions to best protect themselves and others from respiratory illness.

CURRENT TRENDS

Overall, the general spread of **COVID-19, RSV, and flu** in the State of Ohio are **decreasing** this reporting period.



Data source: www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data-research/dashboard/activity-levels.html

In Huron County, Ohio:

- **COVID-19 activity:**
 - COVID-19 wastewater levels in Huron County are decreasing at two sites and increasing at two sites.
 - The number of positive COVID-19 tests reported to the state have decreased.
- **Flu activity** in Huron County has decreased over the past week.
 - There were 50 positive flu tests this week and 4 flu hospitalizations this week.
 - According to the CDC, flu activity in Ohio remains **very high**.
- **RSV activity**
 - RSV has continued to decrease in Ohio.



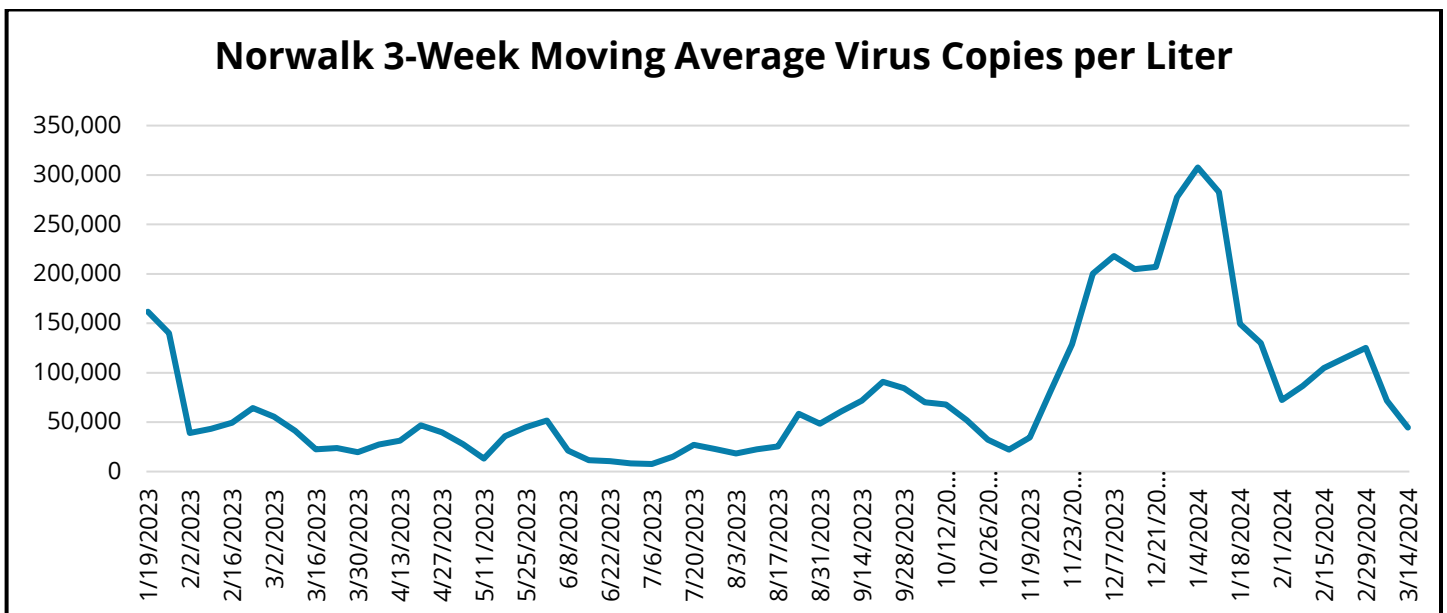
COVID-19

COVID-19 can be very contagious and spreads quickly. People with COVID-19 can have mild to severe symptoms, which may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. COVID-19 is still circulating in communities and can still cause serious illness, hospitalization, and death for some people. Individuals with [certain medical conditions](#) are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

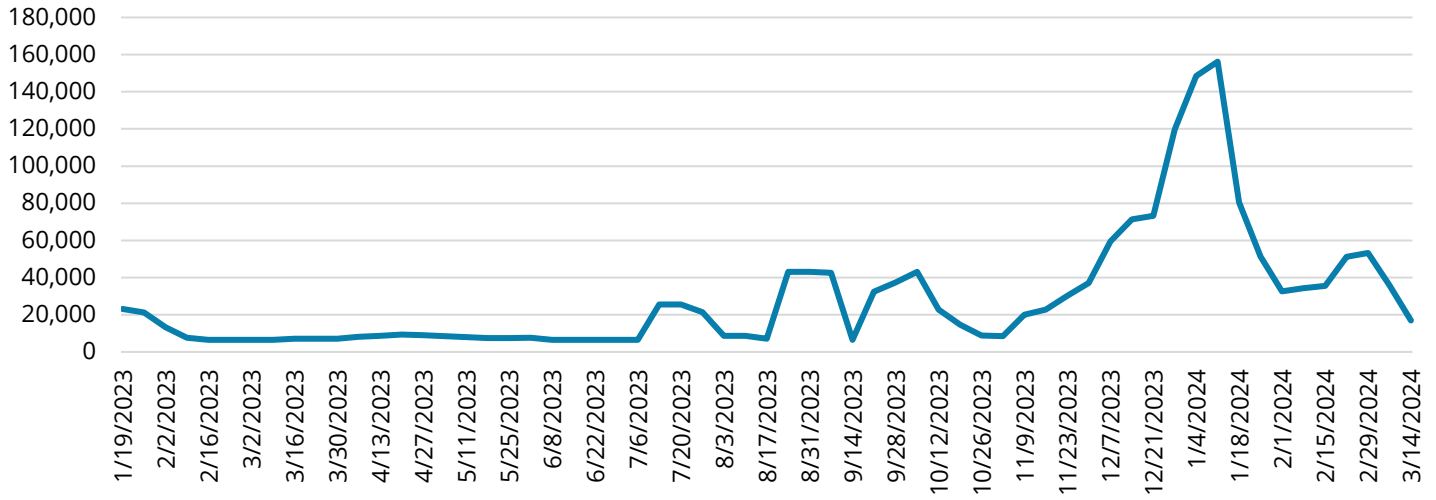
WASTEWATER MONITORING

When you have COVID-19, you shed the virus in your feces and urine, even if you don't have symptoms. Samples are collected each week at local water treatment plants in New London, Norwalk, Monroeville, and Wakeman, and are tested for the amount of COVID-19 virus present before the water is cleaned. Monitoring wastewater in sewage collection systems can provide a warning of increasing and decreasing trends in a community. Since many things can impact this monitoring (community events, rainfall, how sick people are, etc.), wastewater data are reported on a running 3-week average. With this average, it is important to keep in mind that rate changes are more meaningful than an increase in numbers. Because each of our communities has a different number of people living in the wastewater treatment plant service area and each community has a different wastewater flow volume, it is not appropriate to compare actual viral gene copy numbers between communities. In addition, wastewater testing cannot tell us the exact number of individuals with COVID-19 in a community.

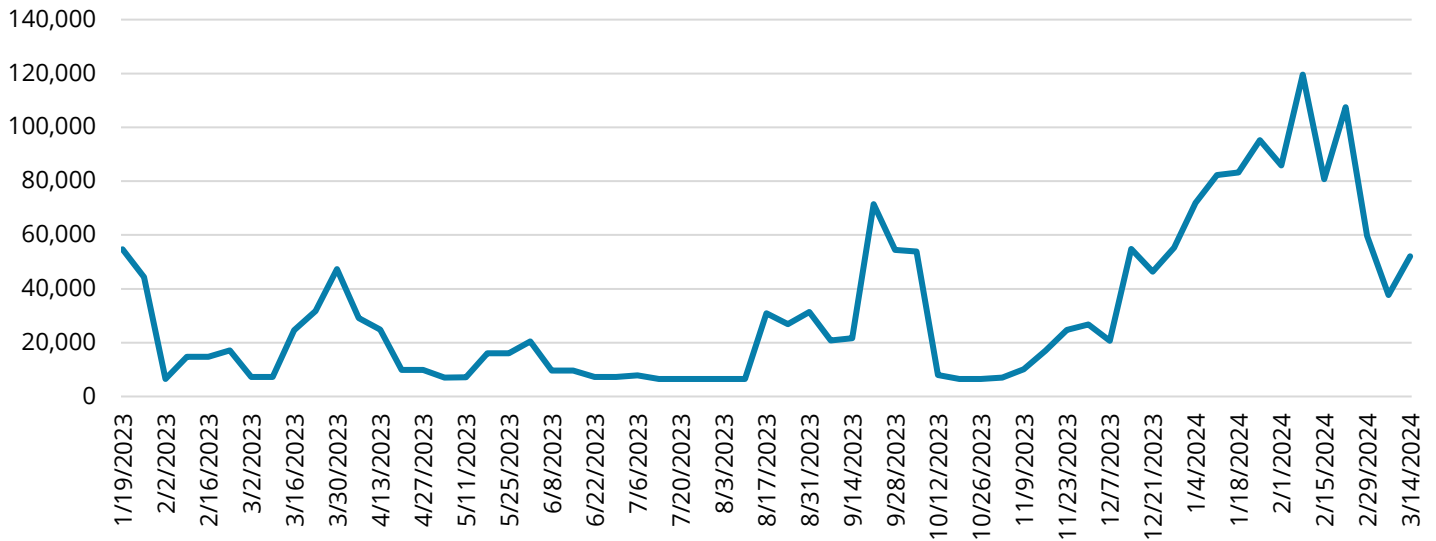
The COVID-19 Wastewater graphs in this week's Respiratory Illness Report show that COVID-19 levels are decreasing in Norwalk and Monroeville. Levels in New London and Wakeman are increasing.

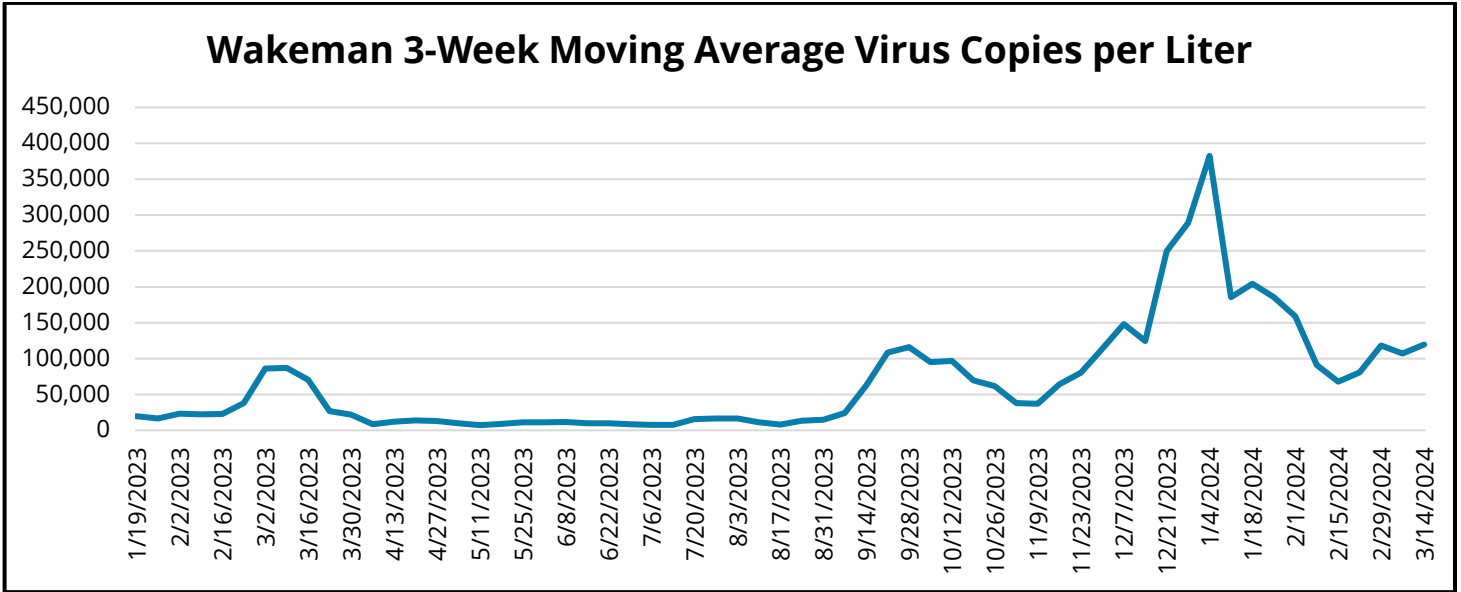


Monroeville 3-Week Moving Average Virus Copies per Liter



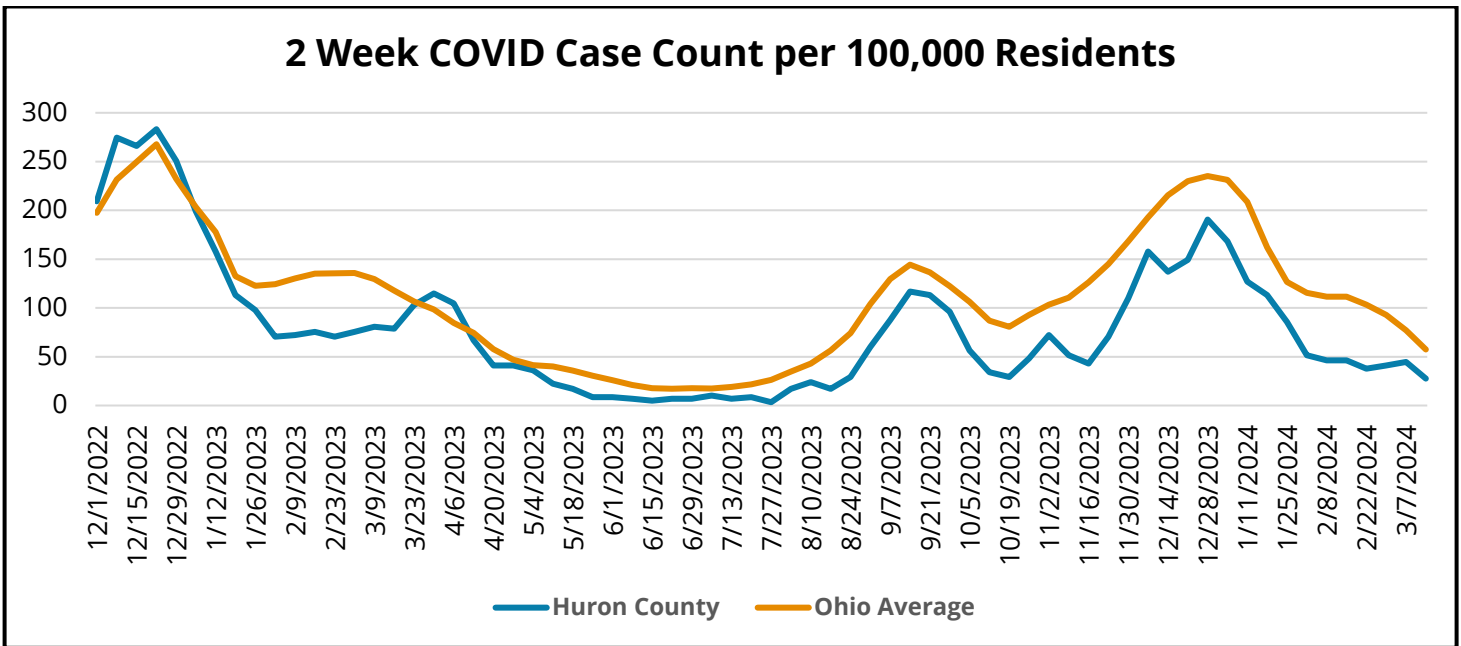
New London 3-Week Moving Average Virus Copies per Liter





OTHER COVID-19 DATA

The Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS) is a system that reports positive COVID-19 tests for medical facilities in Huron County and the State of Ohio. Since the use of at-home test kits is popular and may impact reporting of COVID-19 cases, and some people that have COVID-19 do not experience symptoms or get tested, this data can be considered with other monitoring methods to look at disease trends in the community. Based on ODRS data this week, COVID-19 case counts in both Huron County and the State of Ohio are **decreasing**.



MORE INFORMATION

For more information about COVID-19, visit the Ohio Department of Health's website at <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/covid-19> or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>.



INFLUENZA (FLU)

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms: fever (or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, tiredness, some people may have vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children). People 65 years and older, young children, pregnant people, and people with certain health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious complications from flu.

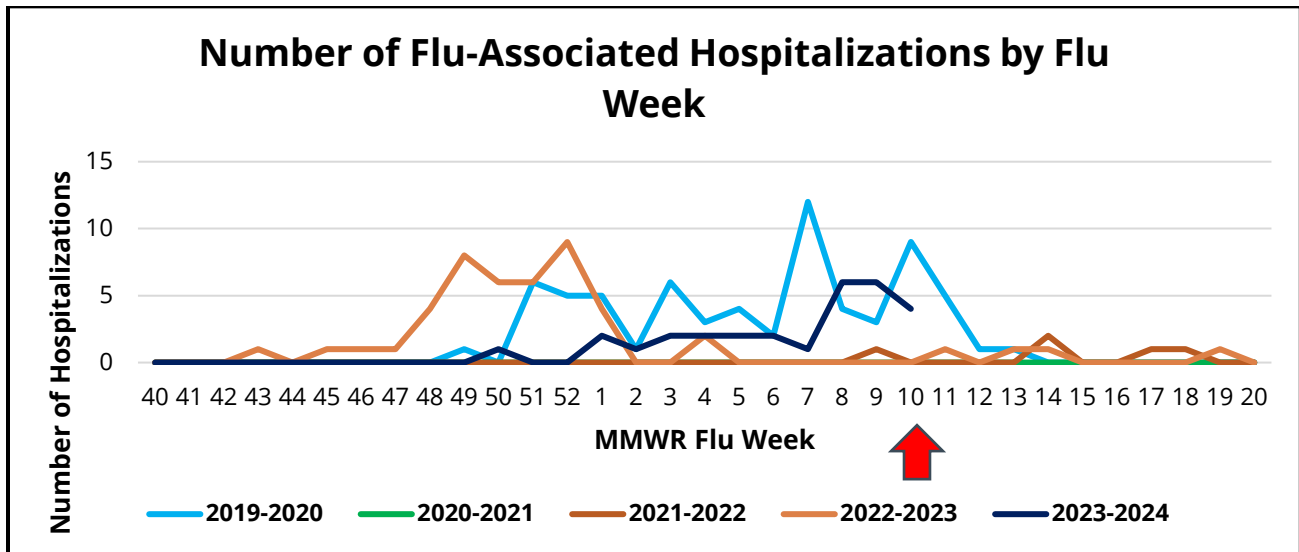
LOCAL DATA

Flu in Huron County

Influenza (flu) Indicator	Current Activity Level	Last Week's Activity Level	Number of Weeks for Trend	This Week Last Year (2023)
Flu Associated Hospitalization	4	6	▼ 1	0
Number of Positive Flu Tests	50	61	▼ 1	1

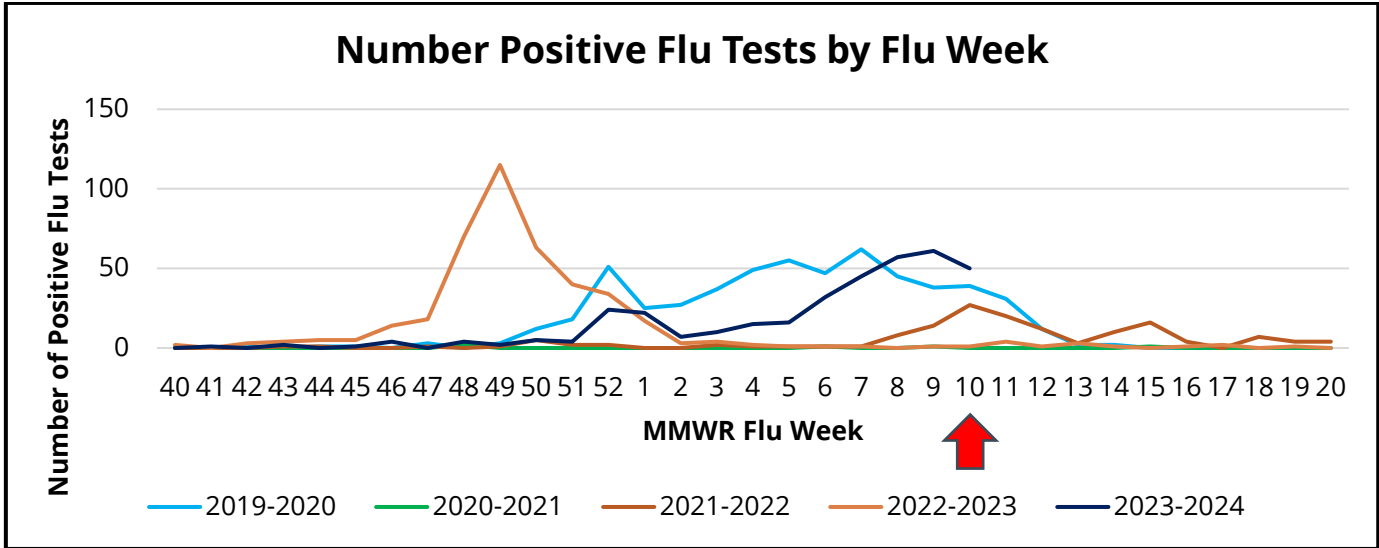
¹Interpret with caution. Indicators with small numbers subject to large weekly percentage fluctuations.

²Number of weeks "▲" = Increase (>10%), "▼" = Decrease (>10%), "●" = Stable (-10% to +10%).



**Current reporting period depicted by red arrow on chart.*





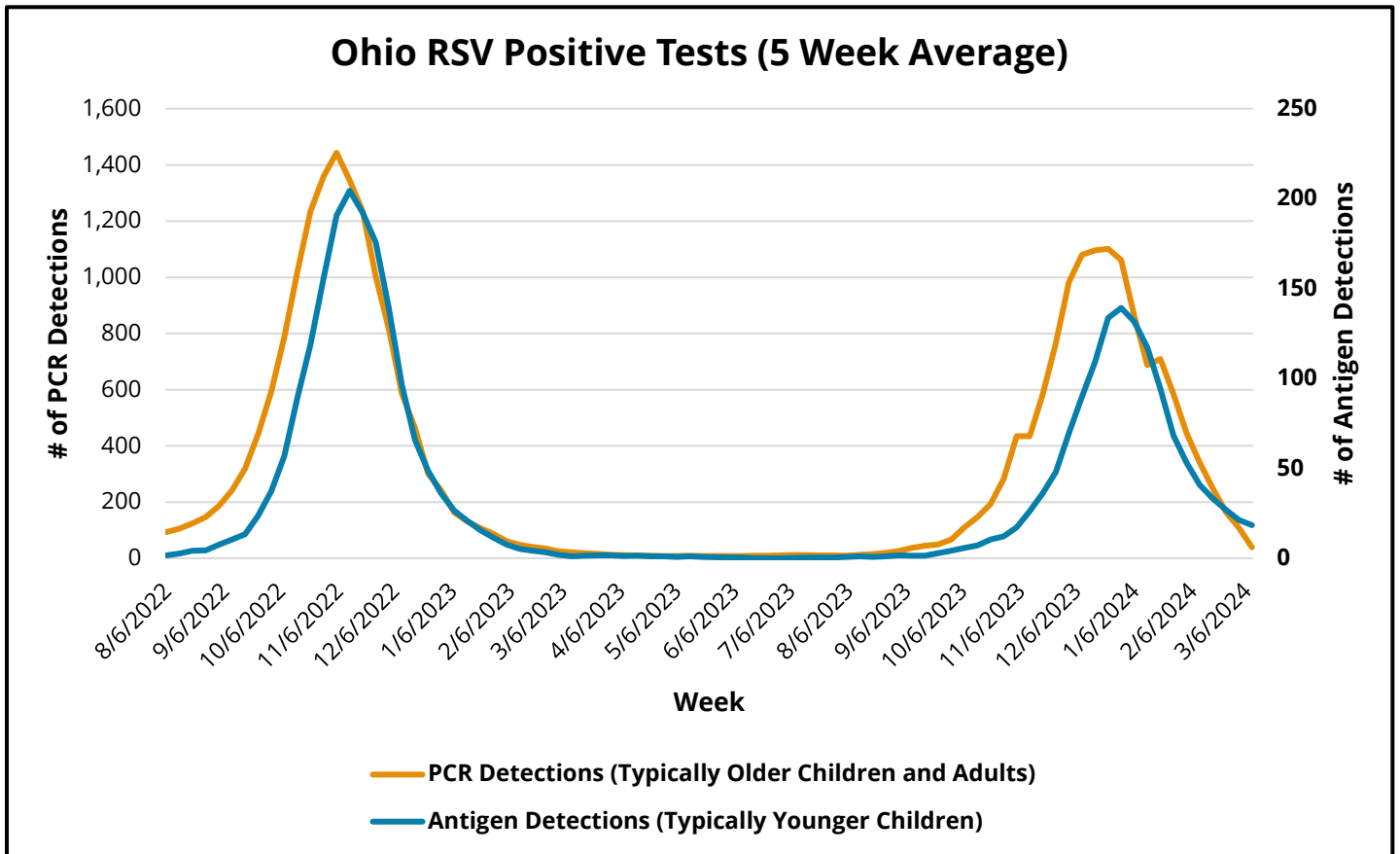
**Current reporting period depicted by red arrow on chart.*



RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common virus that usually causes mild cold-like symptoms like cough, runny nose, and low-grade fever. It can also cause wheezing. Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can be serious, especially in babies and children under 5 years old and in older adults.

STATE DATA



Data from: <https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrevss/rsv/state.html#OH>

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about RSV, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website at <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv>.



HOW RESPIRATORY VIRUSES SPREAD

COVID-19, flu, and RSV spread in similar ways. When an infected person breathes out droplets containing a virus or when people cough, sneeze, or talk, and very small particles that contain the viruses are breathed in by other people or land on their eyes, noses, or mouth, people can become infected. Respiratory viruses may also spread by people touching a contaminated surface or object that has a virus on it, then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes, or in some cases, through direct contact with the virus (like kissing the face of a child with RSV).

PREVENTION

Anyone can get a respiratory virus, but some people have a higher risk of getting very sick from it. Whether or not you're at higher risk, you can use tools to lower your chances of catching or spreading a respiratory virus and lower your likelihood of getting very sick if you do catch one. Here are some things to consider this respiratory illness season:

- **Handwashing & cleaning:** Handwashing with soap removes most germs, including respiratory viruses, from your hands. If soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can kill these germs. It is also important to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, and mobile devices often.
- **Air quality improvements:** Virus particles in the air spread between people more easily indoors than outdoors. Opening windows or using air filters can reduce the amount of virus you are exposed to.
- **Masks:** Mask effectiveness against different viruses varies, but generally masks can potentially help reduce the amount of germs you breathe in. You can also use masks to help protect others if you have a respiratory virus.
- **Physical spacing:** The closer you are to a greater number of people, the more likely you are to be exposed to respiratory virus. Generally, infectious droplets and particles are more concentrated closer to the person who is infected. If possible, stay away from others who are sick.
- **Get vaccinated:** Vaccines are one important way that you can build immunity from a virus. Vaccines help the body learn how to defend itself from disease without the dangers of an infection. The immunity you gain from vaccination can reduce your risk of infection and becoming very sick if you do get infected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all people aged 6 months and older stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and receive a seasonal flu vaccine. If you are 60 years and older, talk to your healthcare provider to see if RSV vaccination is right for you. CDC also recommends that all infants receive protection from one of two immunizations to protect them from getting very sick with RSV.
- **Testing:** If you have symptoms of a respiratory virus, there are tests that can help determine which virus you may have.
 - COVID-19 tests are widely available over the counter and from HCPH's main office, free and available during regular business hours at 28 Executive Drive in Norwalk. Free COVID-19 test kits can also be ordered through www.covid.gov/tests. Note that expiration dates for most COVID-19 test kits have been extended; visit [At-Home OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests | FDA](#) to view the most up-to-date expiration dates.



- Your healthcare provider can help advise you on getting tested for flu, RSV, or other respiratory viruses.
- **Treatment:** Prescription antiviral treatments for COVID-19 and for flu are available and can lower your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death if they are started soon after you become infected. Treatment for RSV is supportive care, as there is no effective antiviral for RSV currently. If you become ill, talk with your healthcare provider about what treatment is right for you.

Information source: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/index.html>

