

COVID-19 & FLU EXPRESS



COVID-19 & Flu Express is a weekly report produced by Surveillance Division of the Communicable Disease Branch of the Centre for Health Protection. It monitors and summarises the latest local and global COVID-19 and influenza activities.

Local Situation of COVID-19 Activity (as of Jul 29, 2026)

Reporting period: Jul 19, 2026 – Jul 25, 2026 (Week 30)

- The latest surveillance data showed that local COVID-19 activity is currently in an active period and remains at a relatively high level.
- The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has been closely monitoring the local prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 variants. The latest sewage surveillance data and genetic analysis of positive respiratory specimens showed that NB.1.8.1 and its descendant lineages are the most prevalent variants in Hong Kong. NB.1.8.1 is related to the lineage JN.1. The World Health Organization (WHO) listed NB.1.8.1 as a variant under monitoring (VUM) on May 23, 2025, and stated that the current approved COVID-19 vaccines are expected to be effective against NB.1.8.1, and there is no evidence to suggest that NB.1.8.1 will cause more serious diseases.
- Members of the public are advised to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times for personal protection against COVID-19 infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. High-risk people (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised) should adopt additional measures to protect themselves such as wearing mask properly when going to public places. For other details, please visit the COVID-19 information page (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/102466.html>).
- Members of the public are advised to take note of the latest recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong to protect themselves from serious outcomes of COVID-19. High-risk priority groups are recommended to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least six months since the last dose or infection, regardless of the number of doses received previously. For more details, please visit (https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/consensus_recommendations_on_the_use_of_covid-19_vaccines_in_hong_kong_oct2025.pdf).
- For the latest information on COVID-19 and prevention measures, please visit the thematic website of COVID-19 (<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>).

Laboratory surveillance for COVID-19 cases

Positive nucleic acid test laboratory detections for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus

(Note: The data reported are provisional figures and subject to further revision.)

In week 30, the weekly number of newly recorded positive nucleic acid test laboratory detections for SARS-CoV-2 virus was 669 as compared to 622 in the preceding week. (Figure 1.1)

In the first 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26 – Jul 29), the daily number of newly recorded positive nucleic acid test laboratory detections for SARS-CoV-2 virus ranged from 87 to 121.

Since Jan 30, 2023, the cumulative number of positive nucleic acid test laboratory detections was 88,256 (as of Jul 29, 2026).

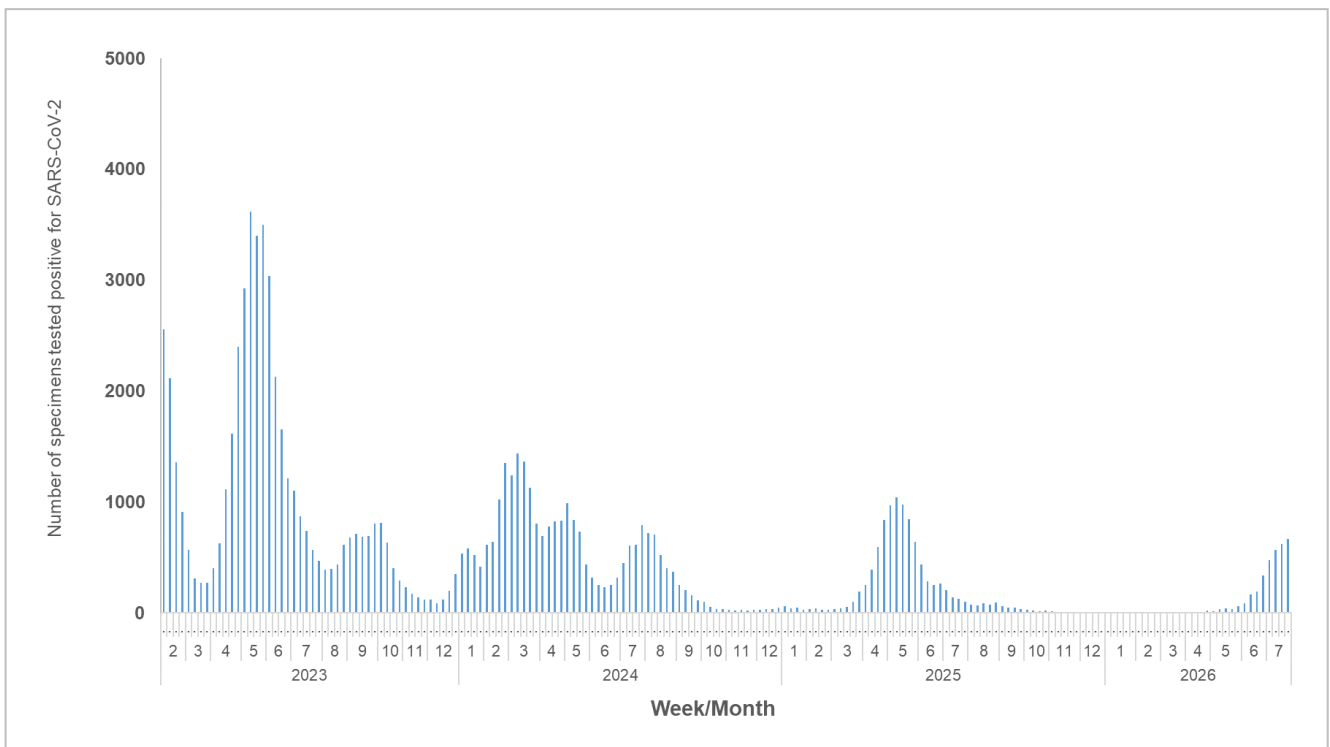


Figure 1.1 Weekly number of positive nucleic acid test laboratory detections for SARS-CoV-2 virus

Positive detection rate of specimens tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus at the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, Centre for Health Protection

Among the 10,665 respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in week 30, 1,007 (9.44%) were tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus as compared to 1,073 (10.28%) in the preceding week. (Figure 1.2)

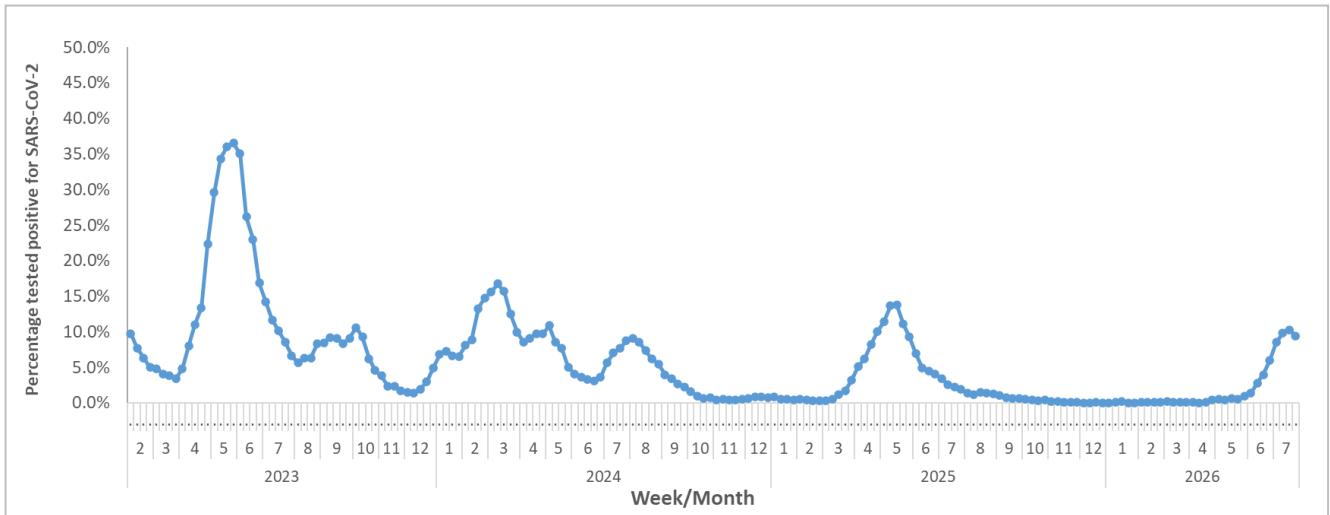


Figure 1.2 Percentage of specimens tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus at PHLSB

COVID-19 outbreak surveillance

(Note: The data reported are provisional figures and subject to further revision.)

In week 30, 25 COVID-19 outbreaks occurring in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 134 persons), as compared to 35 outbreaks recorded in the previous week (affecting 229 persons). (Figure 1.3)

In the first 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26–Jul 29), 15 COVID-19 outbreaks occurring in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 61 persons).

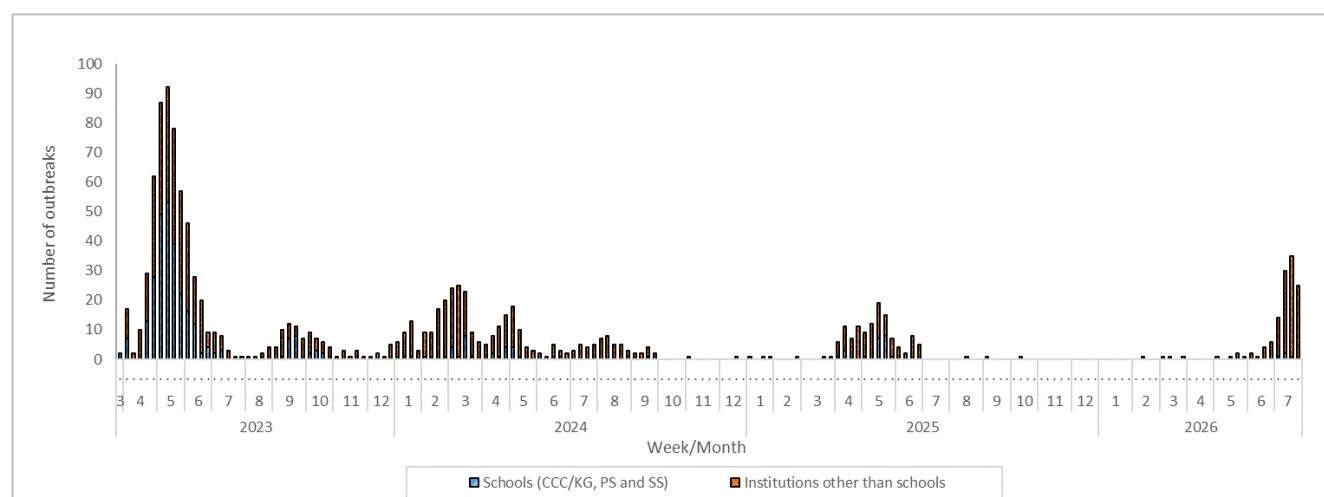


Figure 1.3 COVID-19 outbreaks in schools/institutions

Type of institutions	Week 29	Week 30	First 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26–Jul 29)
Child care centre/ kindergarten (CCC/KG)	0	0	0
Primary school (PS)	0	0	0
Secondary school (SS)	1	0	0
Residential care home for the elderly	22	18	11
Residential care home for persons with disabilities	11	7	3
Others	1	0	1
<i>Total number of outbreaks</i>	35	25	15
<i>Total number of persons affected</i>	229	134	61

Surveillance of severe and fatal COVID-19 cases

(Note: The data reported are provisional figures and subject to further revision.)

In week 30, the weekly number of severe COVID-19 cases including deaths with cause of death preliminarily assessed to be related to COVID-19 was 21 as compared to 26 in the preceding week. (Figure 1.4)

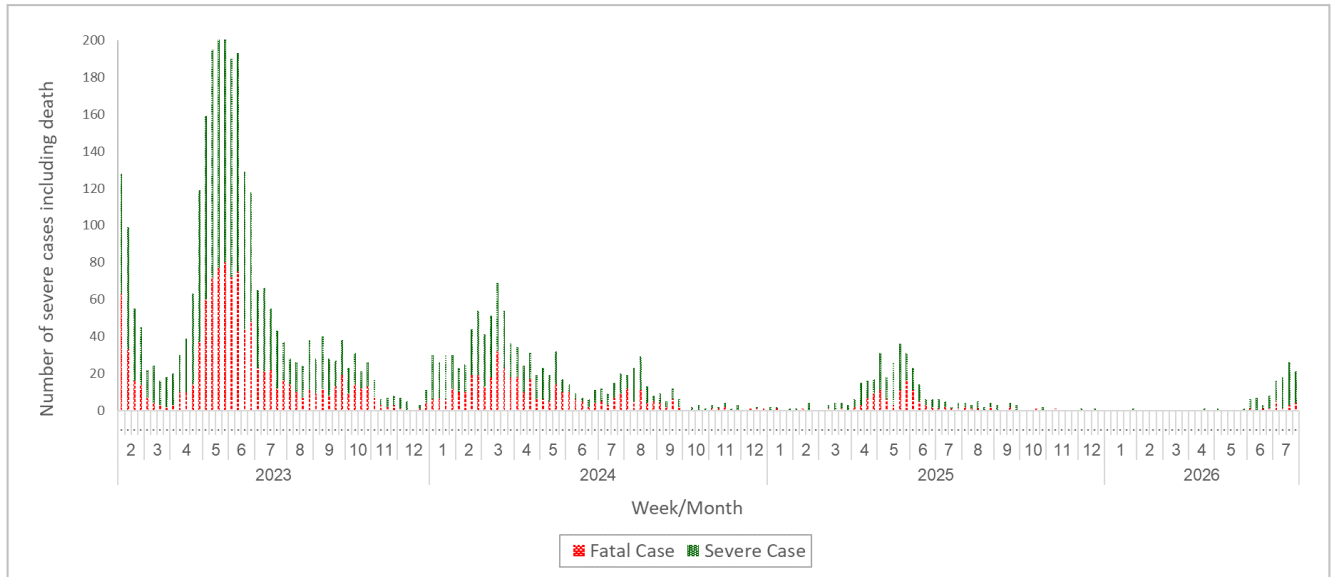


Figure 1.4 Weekly number of severe COVID-19 cases including deaths

Note: Severe and fatal cases are recorded according to their initial reporting dates.

Sewage surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 virus

In week 30, the 7-day geometric mean per capita viral load of SARS-CoV-2 virus from sewage surveillance was around 380,000 copy/L as compared to around 420,000 copy/L in the preceding week. (Figure 1.5)

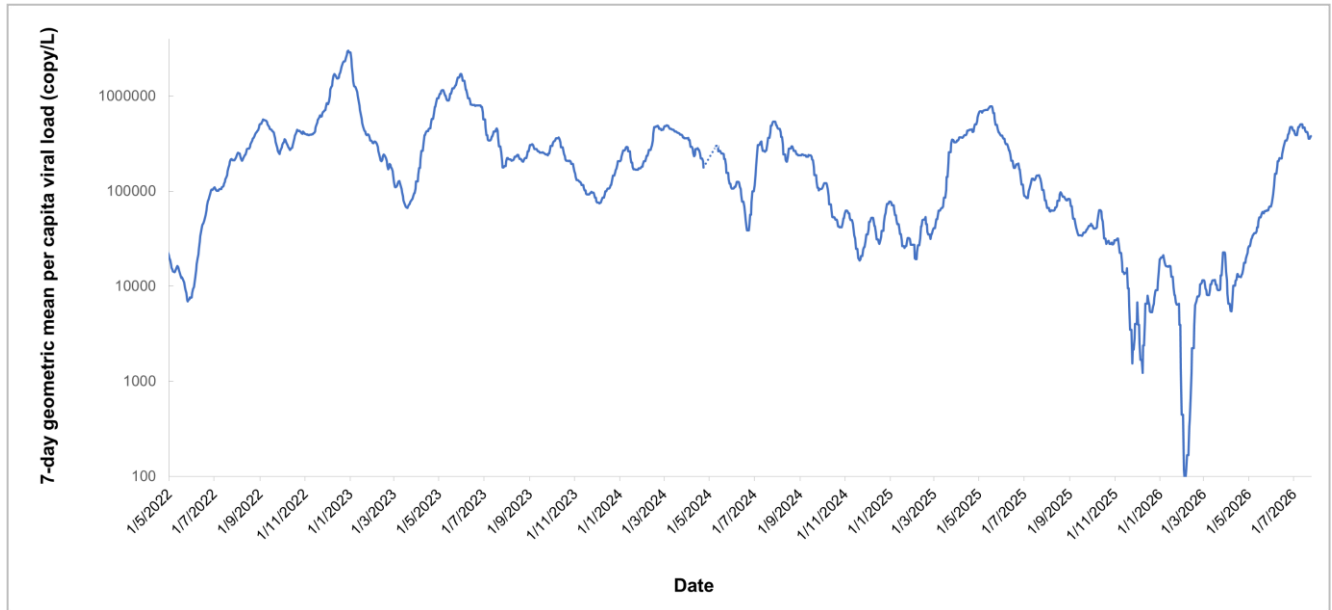


Figure 1.5 7-day geometric mean per capita viral load of SARS-CoV-2 virus from sewage surveillance since May 1, 2022

Note: The dotted line refers to the temporary sewage sampling suspension for a safety review by the Drainage Services Department.

Acknowledgement

The initiative is funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust through its "Special Donation on Epidemic Preparedness" to the CHP.

COVID-19 surveillance among sentinel family medicine clinics and sentinel private medical practitioner clinics

In week 30, the average consultation rate for COVID-19 among sentinel family medicine clinics and sentinel private medical practitioner clinics were 34.9 (Figure 1.6) and 14.2 (Figure 1.7) COVID-19 cases per 1,000 consultations, respectively.

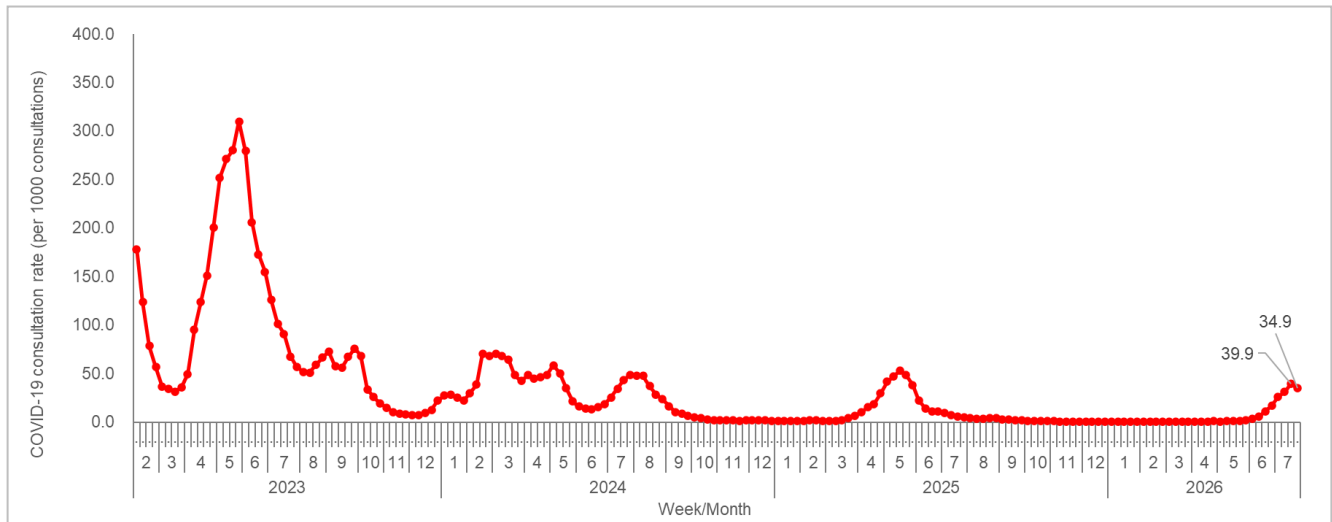


Figure 1.6 Average consultation rate of COVID-19 cases in family medicine clinics

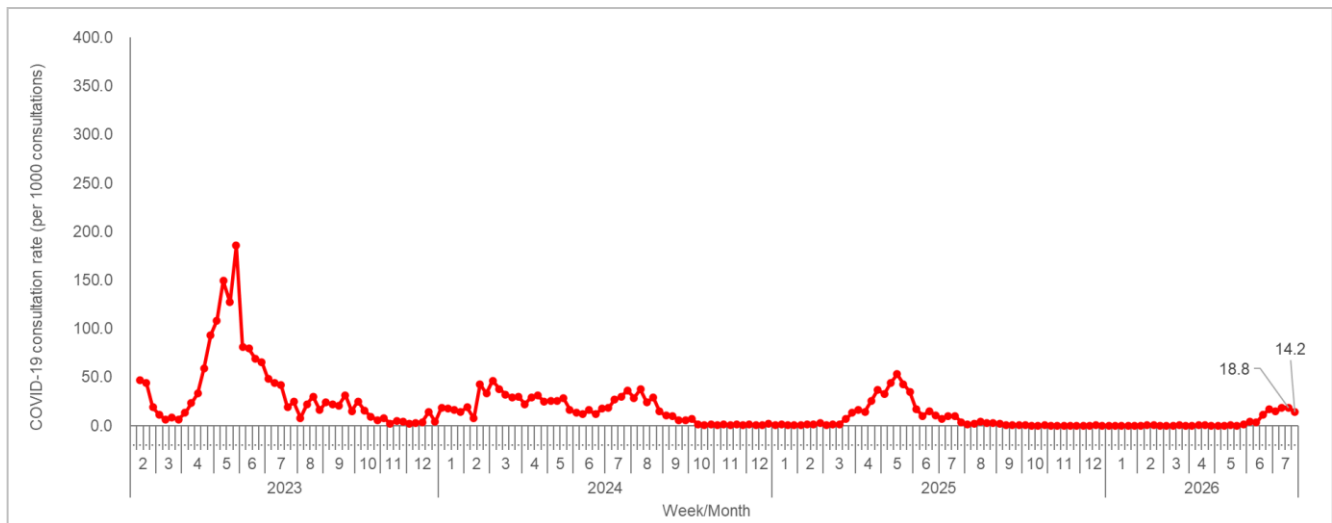


Figure 1.7 Average consultation rate of COVID-19 cases in private medical practitioner clinics

Surveillance on SARS-CoV-2 variants

Currently, WHO is monitoring one variant of interest (VOI), which is JN.1, and four VUMs, which are KP.3.1.1, NB.1.8.1, XFG and BA.3.2. CHP conducts surveillance on SARS-CoV-2 variants from sewage samples. The latest surveillance data (as of Jul 22, 2026) showed that NB.1.8.1 and its descendant lineages are the most prevalent variants, comprising 99.8% of all characterised specimens. (Figure 1.8)

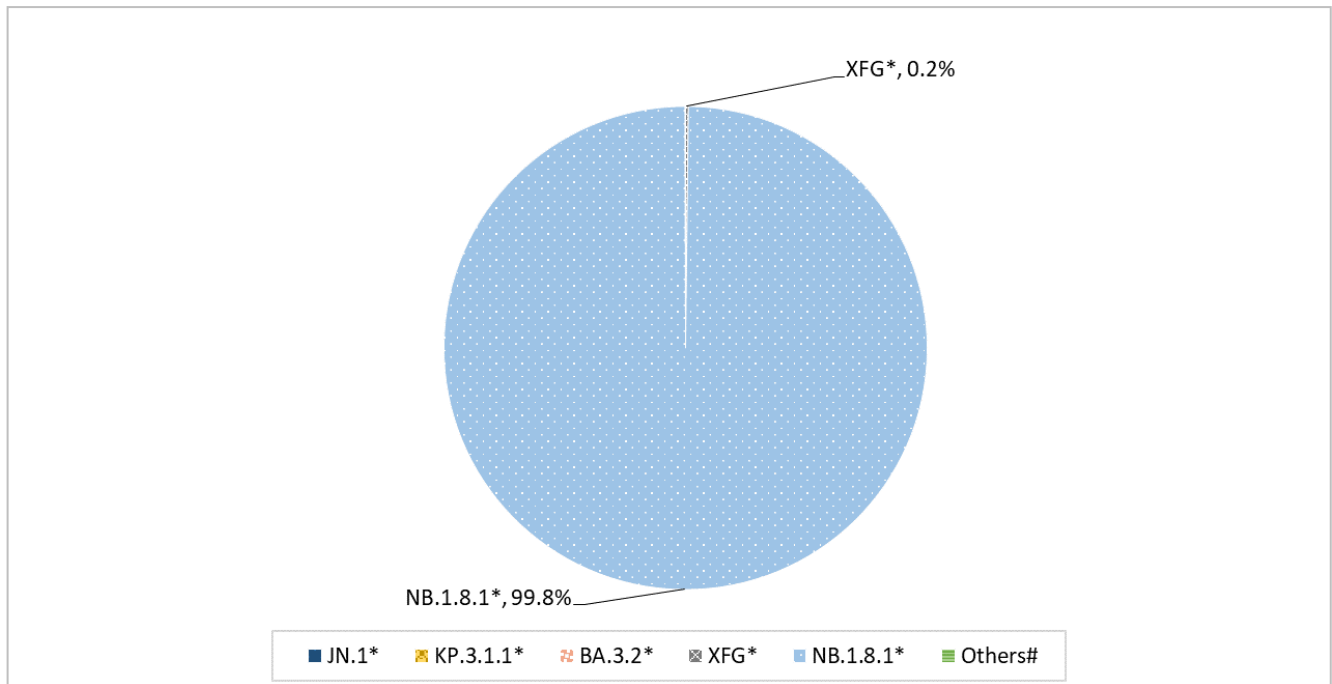


Figure 1.8 Estimated proportion of variants among sewage samples

*Including the variant's descendant lineages, except those individually specified elsewhere in the table.

#Those SARS-CoV-2 variants not classified as VOIs/VUMs by WHO at the time of reporting.

Note: KP.3.1.1 and XFG are the descendant lineages of JN.1. BA.3.2 is a descendent lineage of the Omicron variant BA.3.

CHP also conducted genetic characterisation on positive respiratory specimens between Jul 8 and Jul 21, 2026. The results showed that NB.1.8.1 and its descendant lineages (including PQ.16.1.1) remained the most prevalent variants, comprising 100% of all characterised specimens from severe and fatal cases and 90% from non-severe cases. Among these, PQ.16.1.1 was the predominant sub-lineage, accounting for 83% of severe and fatal cases and 70% of non-severe cases.

Global situation of COVID-19 activity

- According to the WHO, global SARS-CoV-2 activity were stable, with variations observed across some regions.
- The COVID-19 activity in some of the neighbouring regions increased, while the activity levels at the US, Europe, the UK, and Canada remained low.
 - ◆ In Chinese Mainland (week ending Jul 19, 2026), the percentage of specimens tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 has been on the rise, with that observed in southern provinces being higher than that in northern provinces. The predominant variant was NB.1.8.1 recently. In Taiwan region (week ending Jul 27, 2026), the COVID-19 activity continued to increase, with the number of COVID-19 outpatient and emergency visits increasing compared to the previous week. The predominant variant was NB.1.8.1.
 - ◆ In Japan (week ending Jul 19, 2026), the average number of reported COVID-19 cases per sentinel site was 2.12 compared to 1.87 in the preceding week. The predominant variant was BA.3.2.
 - ◆ In South Korea (week ending Jul 18, 2026), the weekly detection rate for SARS-CoV-2 was 4.1% compared to 3.3% in the preceding week. The predominant variant was BA.3.2.
 - ◆ In Singapore (week ending Jul 18, 2026), the positivity rate for COVID-19 among acute respiratory infection (ARI) samples in the community was 10% compared to 9% in the preceding week.
 - ◆ In the United States (week ending Jul 18, 2026), the percent positivity of COVID-19 was 2.2% compared to 1.6% in the preceding week. The predominant variant was XFG.
 - ◆ In Canada (week ending Jun 20, 2026), indicators of COVID-19 activity remained at low level. The percentage of tests positive for COVID-19 was 0.7%, compared to 0.7% in the preceding week. The predominant variants were XFG.
 - ◆ In the United Kingdom (week ending Jul 12, 2026), COVID-19 activity remained at low level. COVID-19 PCR positivity in hospital settings was 1.0% compared to 0.6% in the preceding week. The predominant variant was XFG.
 - ◆ In Europe (week ending Jul 19, 2026), SARS-CoV-2 positivity from sentinel specimens was at 3% compared to 4% at the previous week. The predominant variants were NB.1.8.1 and XFG.
 - ◆ In Australia (fortnight ending Jul 12, 2026), test positivity for SARS-CoV-2 has increased. The predominant variant was NB.1.8.1.

Sources:

Information have been extracted from the following sources when updates are available: [World Health Organization](#), [Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Taiwan Centers for Disease Control](#), [Japan Ministry of Health](#), [Korean Disease Control and Prevention Agency](#), [Singapore Communicable Diseases Agency](#), [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), [UK Health Security Agency](#), [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#) and [WHO Regional Office for Europe \(WHO Euro\)](#), and [Australian Department of Health and Aged Care](#).

Local Situation of Influenza Activity (as of Jul 29, 2026)

Reporting period: Jul 19 – 25, 2026 (Week 30)

- Hong Kong is in influenza season. The latest surveillance data showed that the overall influenza activity continued to increase.
- Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that seasonal influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications are recommended to receive influenza vaccine to protect themselves against seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as related hospitalisations and deaths.
- 2025/26 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination (SIV) Programmes, including the SIV School Outreach Programme and the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme, have been commenced on September 25, 2025, and the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme has also been commenced on September 22, 2025. Eligible high-risk groups can receive a free or subsidised SIV through various vaccination programmes. The public may visit the CHP's Vaccination Schemes page for more details of the vaccination programmes (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html>).
- Apart from getting influenza vaccination, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene.
- For the latest information on seasonal influenza and its prevention, please visit the Centre for Health Protection's Seasonal Influenza page (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html).

Influenza-like-illness surveillance among sentinel family medicine clinics and sentinel private medical practitioner clinics, 2022-26

In week 30, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel family medicine clinics (FMC) was 17.1 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was the same as 17.1 recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.1, left). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 60.8 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 70.5 recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.1, right).

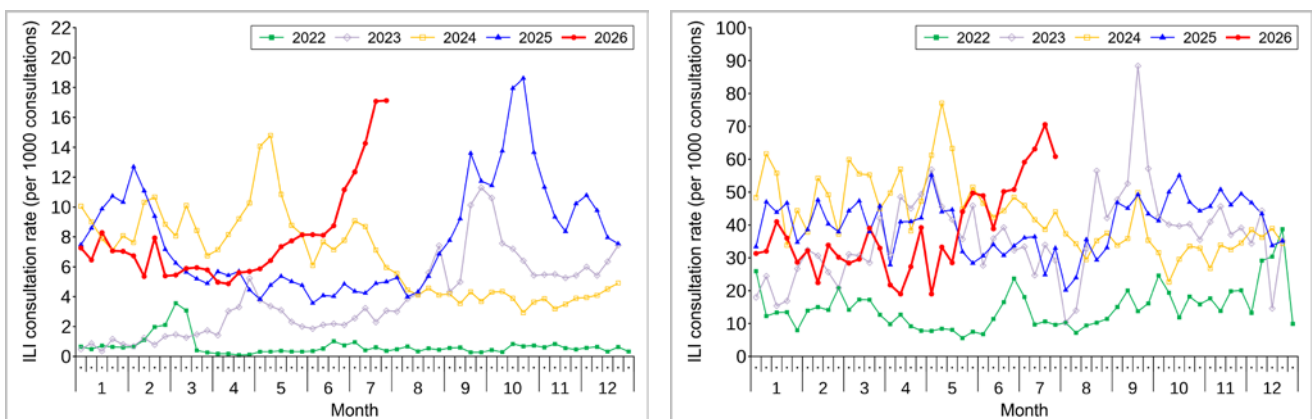


Figure 2.1 ILI consultation rates at sentinel FMC (left) and PMP clinics (right), 2022-26

Laboratory surveillance, 2022-26

Among the 11,424 respiratory specimens* received in week 30, 1,217 (10.65%) were tested positive for seasonal influenza A or B viruses. Among the subtyped influenza detections, there were 483 (41%) influenza A(H1), 567 (48%) influenza A(H3) and 138 (11%) influenza B viruses. The positive percentage (10.65%) was above the baseline threshold of 4.94% and was higher than 9.70% recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.2).

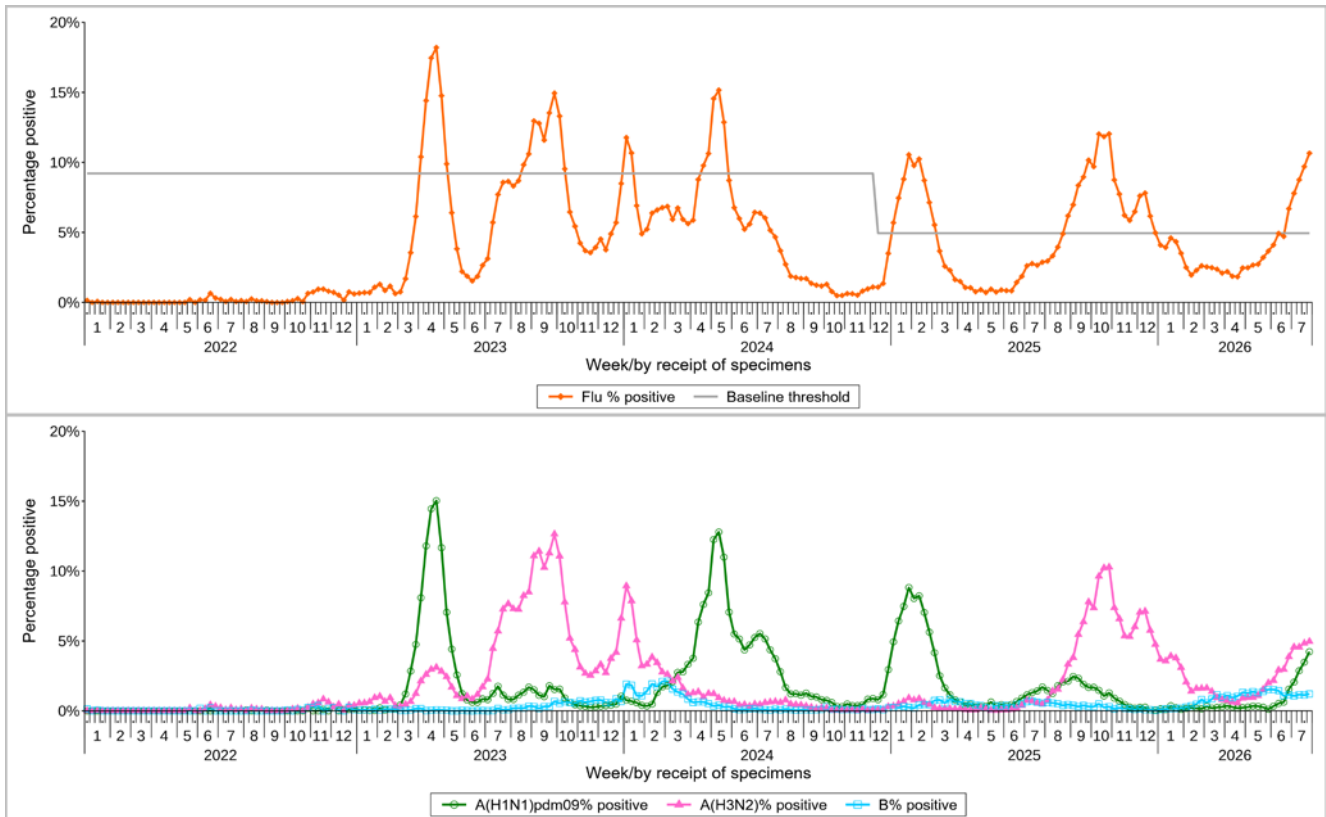


Figure 2.2 Percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for influenza viruses, 2022-26 (upper: overall positive percentage, lower: positive percentage by subtypes)

[Notes: The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health closely monitors the local seasonal influenza activity through a series of surveillance systems. Among them, the CHP sets threshold levels for two important influenza indicators, including the positive percentage of influenza detections among respiratory specimens and the admission rate of patients diagnosed with influenza in public hospitals. These threshold levels are calculated statistically based on data collected for both indicators in the past years during non-season periods. Using these thresholds, the CHP assesses the current local situation of seasonal influenza with higher accuracy and determines whether Hong Kong enters influenza season. The CHP annually reviews and analyses the latest surveillance data, and updates these threshold levels where appropriate. The sensitivity of the surveillance system is enhanced with the updated thresholds of positive percentage of influenza detection and admission rate of higher coherence.]

Remarks: Some specimens may contain vaccine strains from people with recent history of receiving live-attenuated influenza vaccine

* Including 10,665 specimens received by Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, Centre for Health Protection and 759 specimens received by the Hospital Authority

Surveillance of antiviral susceptibility of influenza A and B viruses

- The Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection tests virus isolates of influenza viruses obtained from cell culture for reduced antiviral susceptibility. For influenza A(H1) viruses, genotypic assay for H275Y substitution (which confers resistance to oseltamivir) is also performed on selected clinical specimens.
- In June 2026, there were no new reports of influenza viruses with reduced susceptibility to oseltamivir and baloxavir. There were also no reports of influenza A(H1) virus with H275Y substitution.
- For the results of previous months, please refer to the following webpage: <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/695/7124.html>
- The detection rates of oseltamivir-resistant influenza A and B viruses remain low (less than 5%) according to latest surveillance data of overseas countries.

Influenza-like illness outbreak surveillance, 2022-26

In week 30, 11 ILI outbreaks occurring in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 53 persons), as compared to 27 outbreaks recorded in the previous week (affecting 206 persons) (Figure 2.3). The overall number was at the low intensity level currently (Figure 2.4*). In the first 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26 to 29), 14 ILI outbreaks in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 69 persons). Since the start of the influenza season in week 26, 159 outbreaks were recorded (as of July 29).

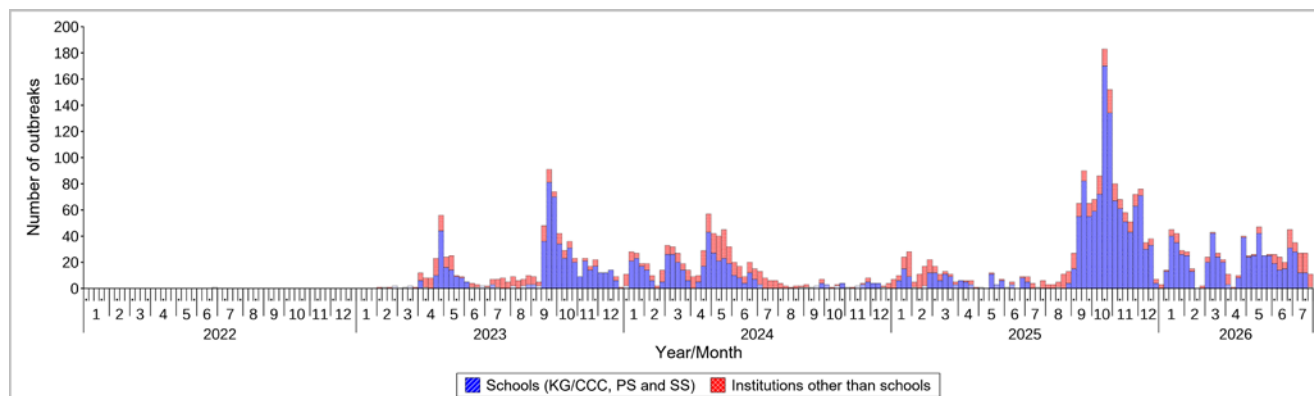


Figure 2.3 ILI outbreaks in schools/institutions, 2022-26

Type of institutions	Week 29	Week 30	Cumulative number of outbreaks during influenza season
Child care centre/ kindergarten (CCC/KG)	6	1	22
Primary school (PS)	6	0	55
Secondary school (SS)	0	0	8
Residential care home for the elderly	6	6	43
Residential care home for persons with	1	1	8
Others	8	3	23
<i>Total number of outbreaks</i>	27	11	159
<i>Total number of persons affected</i>	206	53	1008

In comparison, 163, 103, 78 and 315 outbreaks were recorded in the same duration of surveillance (5 complete weeks) in the 2023 summer, 2023/24 season, 2024/25 winter and 2025 summer seasons respectively, as compared with 145 outbreaks in the current season (Figure 2.5).

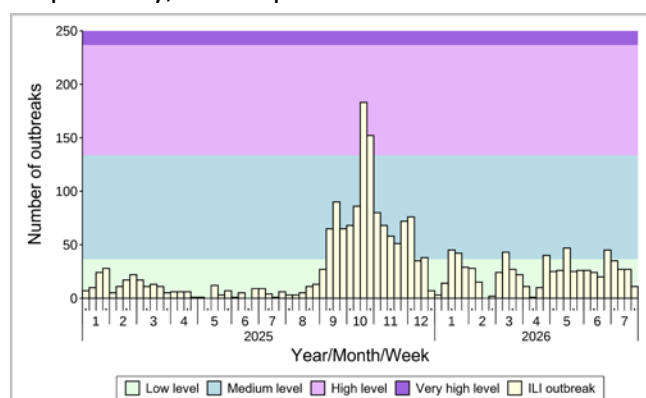


Figure 2.4 ILI outbreaks in schools/institutions, 2025-26

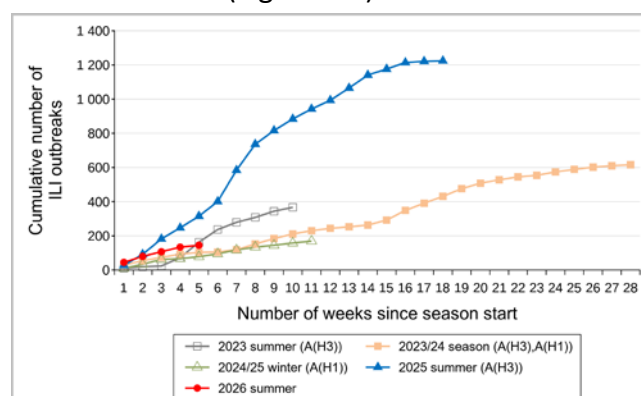


Figure 2.5 Cumulative numbers of ILI outbreaks reported during major influenza seasons, 2023–26

Note: The predominating virus was shown in bracket.

* Various intensity levels applicable for this year were calculated with the moving epidemic method (MEM). For details, please refer to this webpage: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/explanatory_note_for_flux_mem_eng.pdf

Influenza-associated hospital admission rates in public hospitals based on discharge coding, 2022-26

In week 30, the overall admission rate in public hospitals with principal diagnosis of influenza was 0.67 (per 10,000 population) as compared to 0.61 recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.6). It was above the baseline threshold of 0.27 but at the low intensity level (Figure 2.7*). The influenza-associated admission rates for persons aged 0-5 years, 6-11 years, 12-17 years, 18-49 years, 50-64 years and 65 years or above were 2.99, 1.57, 0.56, 0.18, 0.25 and 1.50 cases (per 10,000 people in the age group) respectively, as compared to 2.76, 1.92, 0.83, 0.14, 0.23 and 1.26 cases in the previous week (Figure 2.6).

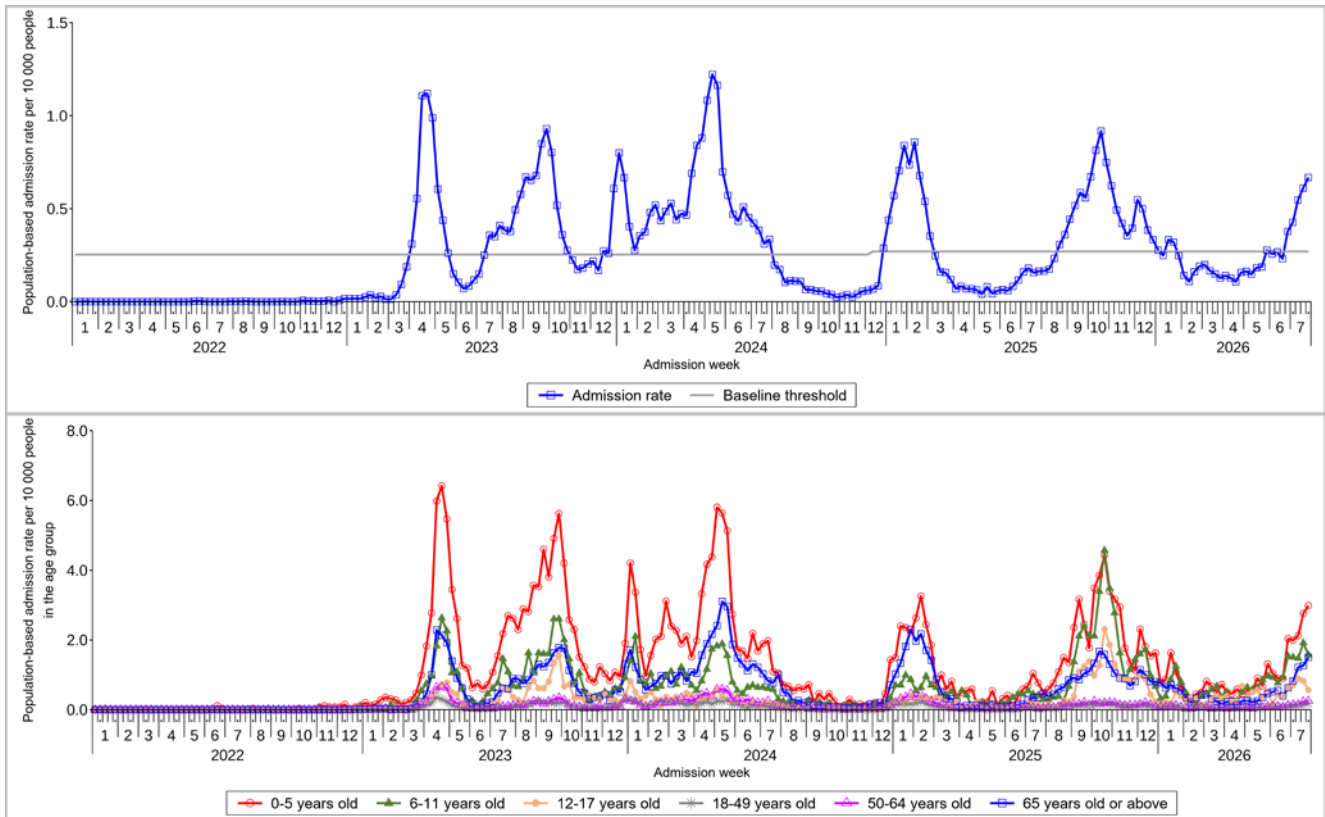


Figure 2.6 Influenza-associated hospital admission rates, 2022-26 (upper: overall rate, lower: rates by age groups)

[Notes: The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health closely monitors the local seasonal influenza activity through a series of surveillance systems. Among them, the CHP sets threshold levels for two important influenza indicators, including the positive percentage of influenza detections among respiratory specimens and the admission rate of patients diagnosed with influenza in public hospitals. These threshold levels are calculated statistically based on data collected for both indicators in the past years during non-season periods. Using these thresholds, the CHP assesses the current local situation of seasonal influenza with higher accuracy and determines whether Hong Kong enters influenza season. The CHP annually reviews and analyses the latest surveillance data, and updates these threshold levels where appropriate. The sensitivity of the surveillance system is enhanced with the updated thresholds of positive percentage of influenza detection and admission rate of higher coherence.]

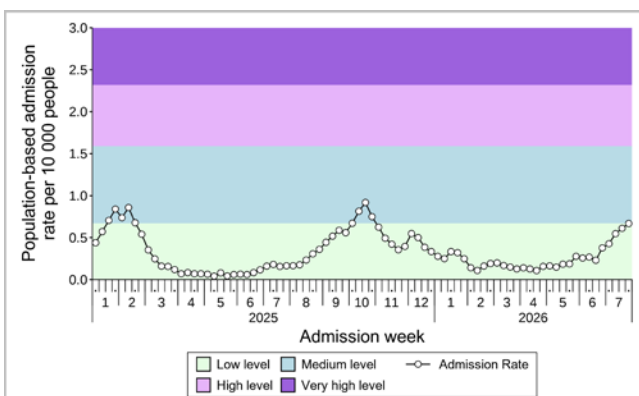


Figure 2.7 Influenza-associated hospital admission rates, 2025-26

*Various intensity levels applicable for this year were calculated with the moving epidemic method (MEM). For details, please refer to this webpage: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/explanatory_note_for_flux_mem_eng.pdf

Rate of ILI syndrome group in accident and emergency departments, 2022-26[#]

In week 30, the rate of the ILI syndrome group in the accident and emergency departments (AEDs) was 169.0 (per 1,000 coded cases), which was lower than the rate of 174.5 in the previous week (Figure 2.8).

#Note: This syndrome group includes codes related to ILI such as influenza, upper respiratory tract infection, fever, cough, throat pain, and pneumonia.

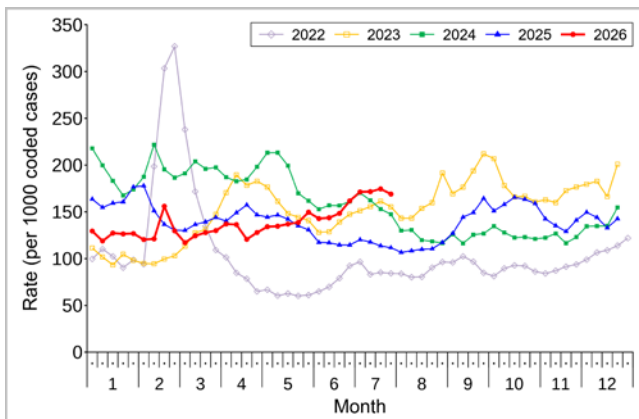


Figure 2.8 Rate of ILI syndrome group in AEDs, 2022-26

Fever surveillance at sentinel child care centres/ kindergartens, 2022-26

In week 30, 0% of children in the sentinel child care centres / kindergartens (CCCs/KGs) had fever (38°C or above) as compared to 1.10% recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.9).

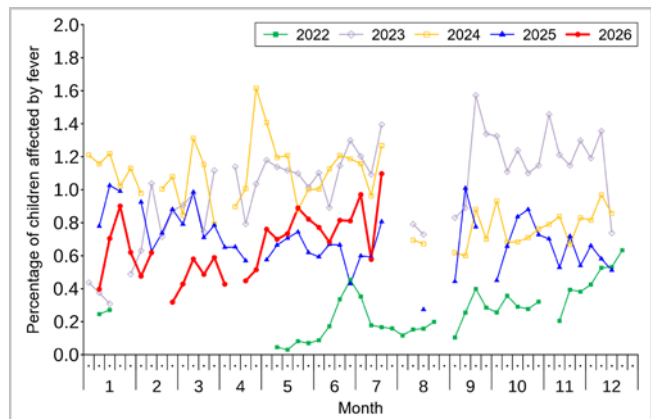


Figure 2.9 Percentage of children with fever at sentinel CCCs/KGs, 2022-26

Fever surveillance at sentinel residential care homes for the elderly, 2022-26

In week 30, 0.18% of residents in the sentinel residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) had fever (38°C or above), compared to 0.13% recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.10).

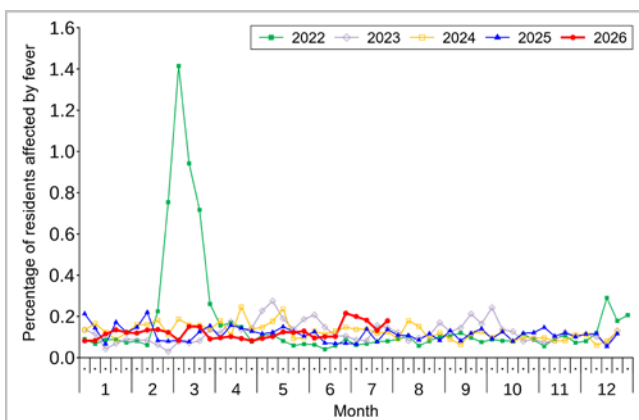


Figure 2.10 Percentage of residents with fever at sentinel RCHes, 2022-26

Influenza-like illness surveillance among sentinel Chinese medicine practitioners, 2022-26

In week 30, the average consultation rate for ILI among Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) was 1.25 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations as compared to 1.16 recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.11).

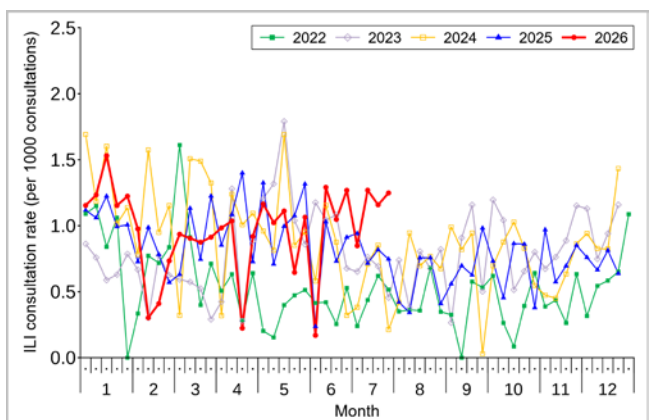


Figure 2.11 ILI consultation rate at sentinel CMPs, 2022-26

Surveillance of severe influenza cases

(Note: The data reported are provisional figures and subject to further revision.)

Surveillance for intensive care unit (ICU) admission/death with laboratory confirmation of influenza among adult patients (Aged 18 years or above)

Since 2018, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has collaborated with the Hospital Authority and private hospitals to monitor ICU admissions and deaths with laboratory confirmation of influenza among adult patients regularly. For surveillance purpose, the cases refer to laboratory-confirmed influenza patients who required ICU admission or died within the same admission of influenza infection. Their causes of ICU admission or death may be due to other acute medical conditions or underlying diseases.

- In week 30, 44 adult cases of ICU admission/death with laboratory confirmation of influenza (including 26 deaths) were recorded, as compared to 27 cases (including 14 deaths) in the previous week. Among the 44 adult cases, 21 were not known to have received the SIV. In the first 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26 to 29), 26 cases were recorded, in which 14 of them were fatal.

Week	Influenza type					
	A(H1)	A(H3)	A (pending subtype)	B	A and B	C
Week 30	11	27	2	4	0	0
First 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26 to 29)	3	16	3	4	0	0

- During the influenza season, 169 adult cases of ICU admission/death with laboratory confirmation of influenza were recorded, in which 94 of them were fatal (as of Jul 29). Among them, 99 patients had influenza A(H3) infection, 43 patients with influenza A(H1), 18 patients with influenza B and 9 patients with influenza A (subtype pending).
- In comparison, 129, 155, 264 and 132 adult cases were recorded in the same duration of surveillance (5 complete weeks) in the 2023 summer, 2023/24 season, 2024/25 winter and 2025 summer seasons respectively, as compared with 143 cases in the current season (Figure 2.12, left). The corresponding figures for deaths were 81, 95, 166, 94 in the above seasons, as compared with 80 deaths in the current season (Figure 2.12, right).

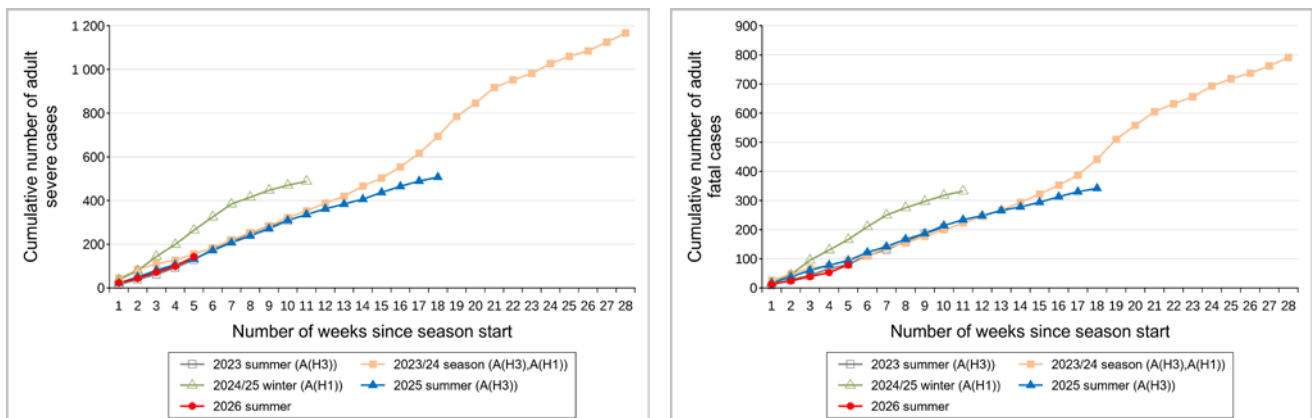


Figure 2.12 Cumulative numbers of adult severe influenza cases reported during major influenza seasons, 2023–26 (left: ICU admission/death cases; right: deaths)

Note: The predominating virus was shown in bracket.

Surveillance of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death (Aged below 18 years)

- In week 30 and the first 4 days of week 31 (Jul 26 to 29), there was one case of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death.

Reporting week	Age	Sex	Complication	Fatal case?	Influenza subtype	History of receiving 2025/26 influenza vaccine
31	6 years	Female	Shock	No	Influenza A(H1)	Yes

- During the influenza season, 4 paediatric cases of influenza-associated complication/death were reported, in which none of them was fatal. 2 cases had infections with influenza A(H3) and 2 with influenza A(H1). One case had not received SIV. In 2026, 12 paediatric cases of influenza-associated complication were reported, in which none of them was fatal (as of Jul 29).
- In comparison, 9, 5, 9 and 9 paediatric cases of influenza-associated complication/death were recorded in the same duration of surveillance (5 complete weeks) in the 2023 summer, 2023/24 season, 2024/25 winter and 2025 summer seasons respectively, as compared with 3 cases in the current season (Figure 2.13, left). The corresponding figures for deaths were 1, 0, 0 and 0 in the above seasons, as compared with 0 death in current season (Figure 2.13, right).

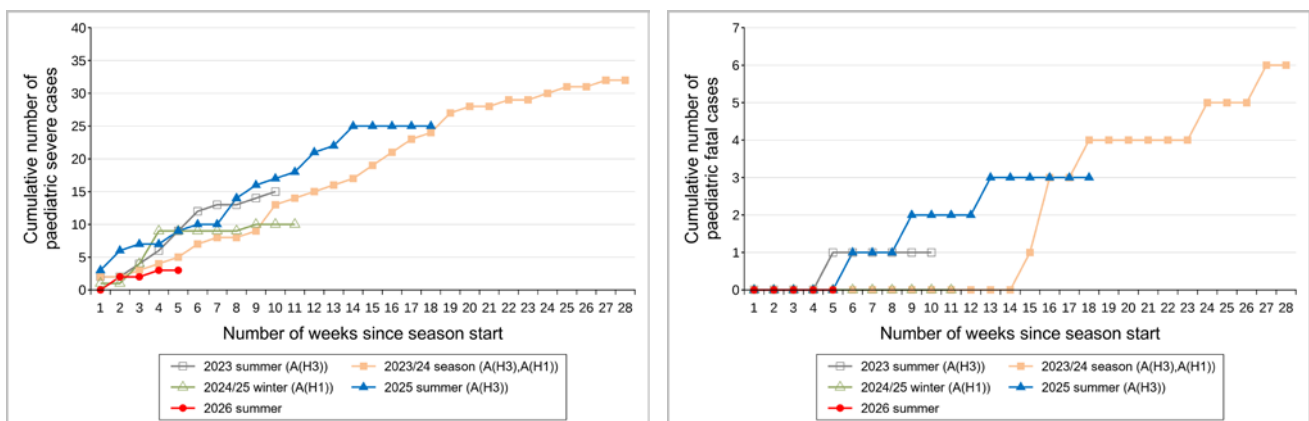


Figure 2.13 Cumulative numbers of cases of paediatric influenza-associated complication/death reported during major influenza seasons, 2023–26 (left: complication/death cases; right: deaths)

Note: The predominating virus was shown in bracket.

Severe influenza cases of all ages

- During the influenza season, 173 severe influenza cases among all ages have been reported, including 94 deaths (as of Jul 29).

Age group	Cumulative number of cases (death)
0-5	1 (0)
6-11	2 (0)
12-17	1 (0)
18-49	13 (1)
50-64	22 (8)
>=65	134 (85)

- Among the adult fatal cases with available clinical information, about 87% had chronic diseases.
- Among patients with laboratory confirmation of influenza admitted to public hospitals in this season, 1.8% of admitted cases died during the same episode of admission. It was lower than the historical range of 2.5% (2017/18 winter season) and 4.5% (2024/25 winter season).

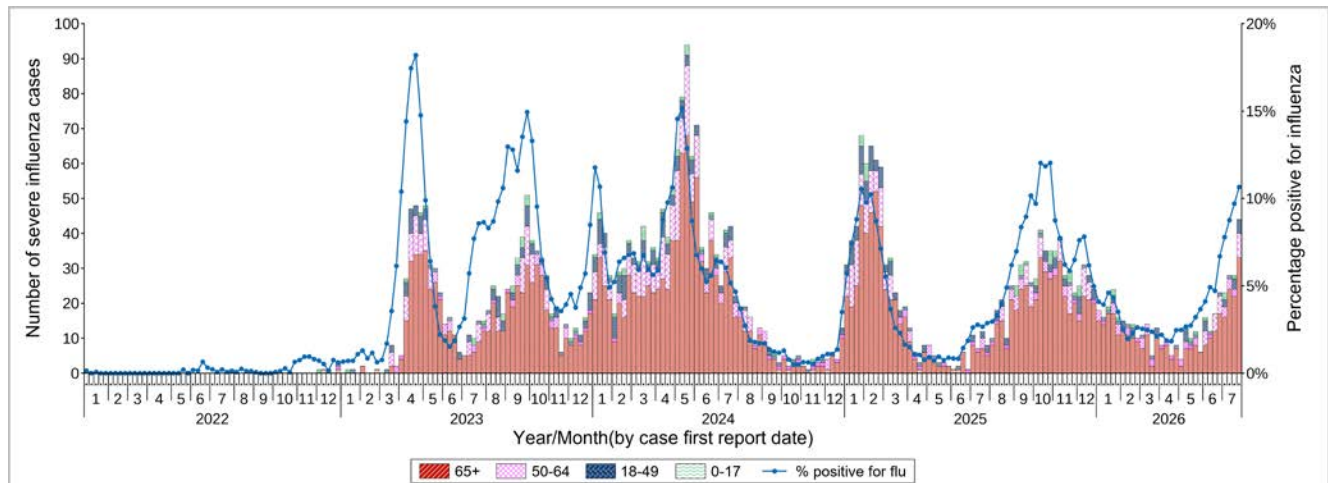


Figure 2.14 Weekly number of severe influenza cases by age groups, 2022-26 (the percentage positive for influenza viruses in Figure 2.2 is also shown in this graph)

Sewage surveillance for seasonal influenza

CHP has leveraged established infrastructure to launch a new sewage-based surveillance indicator for tracking local seasonal influenza activity in the community as a complement to the conventional systems. Starting from late October 2025, CHP publishes sewage surveillance results on seasonal influenza viruses.

In week 30, viral load of influenza A and B viruses from sewage surveillance was 3.70 copies (unit adjusted for population)*, which was higher than 2.72 copies* recorded in the previous week (Figure 2.15).

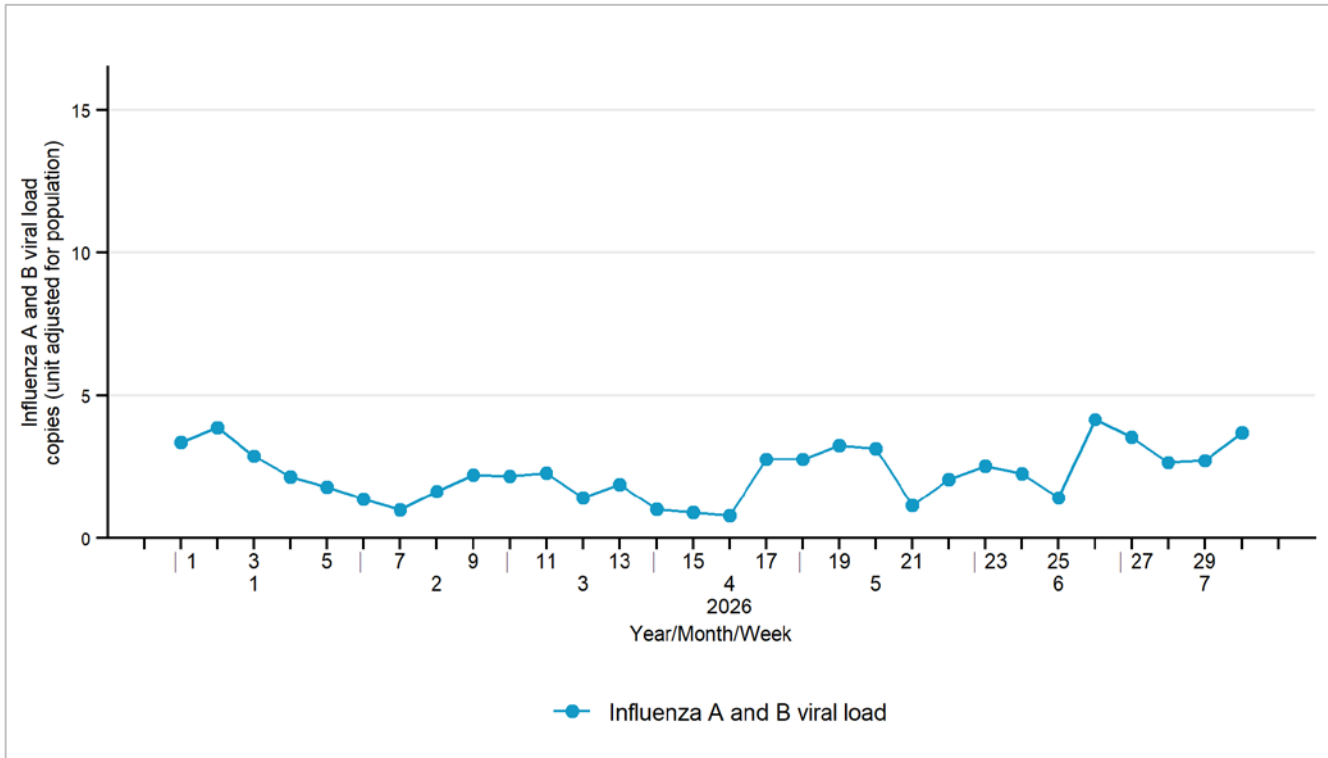


Figure 2.15 Viral load of influenza A and B viruses from sewage surveillance, 2026

**Note: The unit for influenza viral load in sewage is the number of influenza virus copies per 1,000 copies of Pepper Mild Molt Virus (PMMoV), which is a standardised unit. PMMoV is a plant virus primarily found in peppers and their products. It is harmless to humans and does not cause disease. It enters the human body through food ingestion and is excreted in faeces, making it a common biomarker for estimating the size of the population catchment of the sampling sites. Normalising viral load data with PMMoV can reduce the influence of population fluctuations, thereby making the monitoring more accurate and reliable.*

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Global Situation of Influenza Activity

Globally, influenza detections remained low in week 29, 2026. Influenza A and B viruses were detected in similar proportions (data up to Jul 19, 2026).

- In the United States (week ending Jul 18, 2026), seasonal influenza activity is low. The percentage of specimens tested positive for influenza was below 1%.
- In Europe (week ending Jul 19, 2026), influenza activity was at inter-seasonal level.
- In the United Kingdom (week ending Jul 12, 2026), influenza activity remained low and circulated at baseline level.
- In Chinese Mainland (week ending Jul 19, 2026), the percentage of specimens that tested positive for influenza in southern provinces was slightly increased while that in northern provinces decreased, with the rates at 18.0% and 1.8% in week 29, respectively. Majority of influenza detections were influenza B, followed by influenza A(H3) viruses. In Macao (week ending Jul 18, 2026), the influenza positivity rate was 23.6%, similar to the week prior. Influenza A (H3) is predominating.
- In Australia (fortnight ending Jul 12, 2026), the number of influenza cases increased in the last fortnight but remained lower than in previous years. Current influenza trends may reflect greater population immunity following the higher-than-usual influenza activity in late 2025, alongside the impact of seasonal vaccination programs. Most of the influenza notifications were influenza A.
- In New Zealand (week ending Jul 19, 2026), the national ILI rate was stable at 22.33 per 100,000 population, and was lower than this time in 2020 – 2025. For the 20 influenza positive samples detected in 2026 to date, 11 were influenza A(H3), 5 influenza A(pending subtype), 3 was influenza A(H1) and 1 was influenza B.

Sources:

Information has been extracted from the following sources when updates are available: [World Health Organization](#), [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#) and [WHO Regional Office for Europe \(WHO Euro\)](#), [UK Health Security Agency](#), [Chinese National Influenza Center](#), [Australian Centre for Disease Control](#) and [New Zealand Ministry of Health](#)