

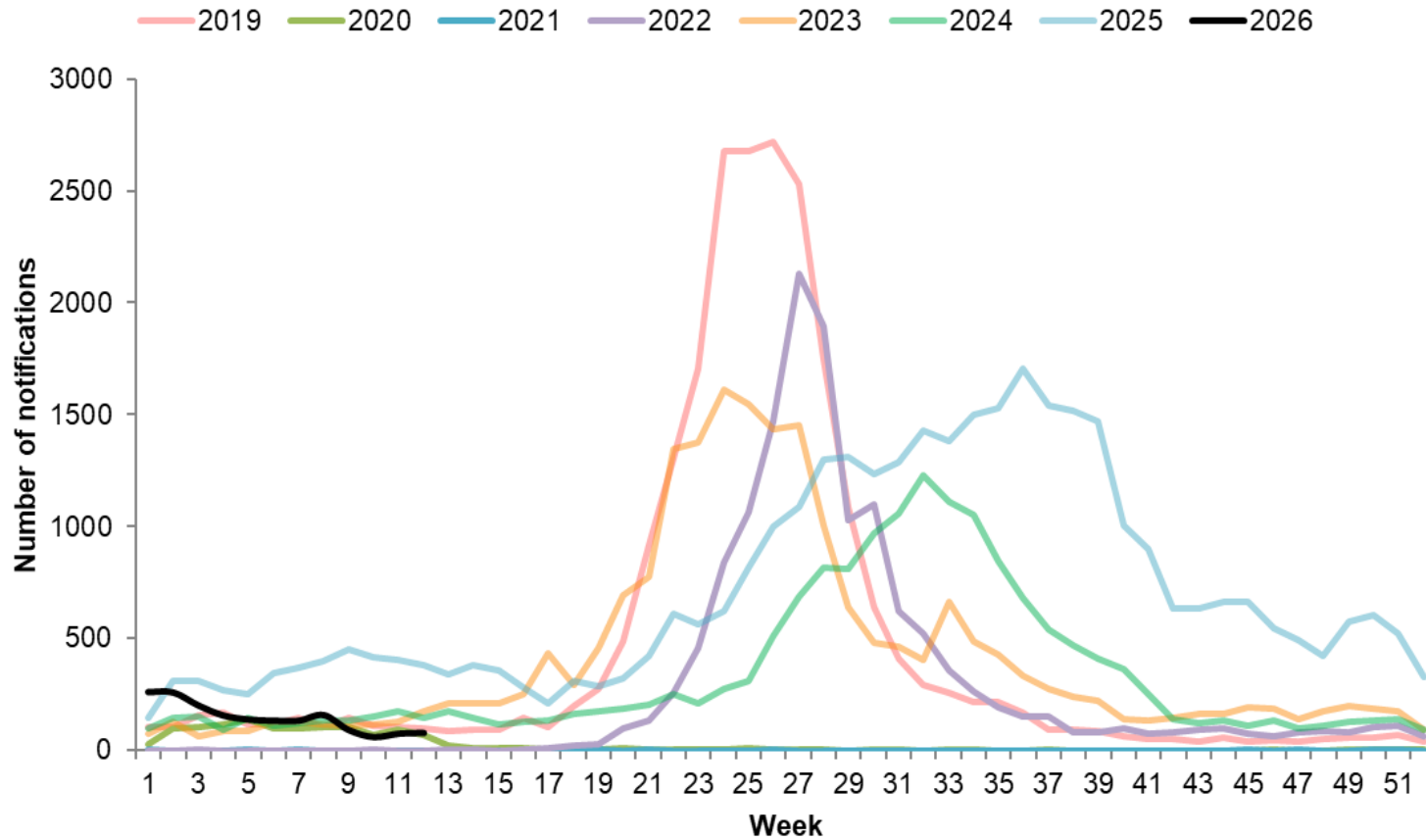


Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Influenza Epidemiology in Western Australia

Hui Leen Tan
Project Officer
Surveillance Disease Control Program
CDCD

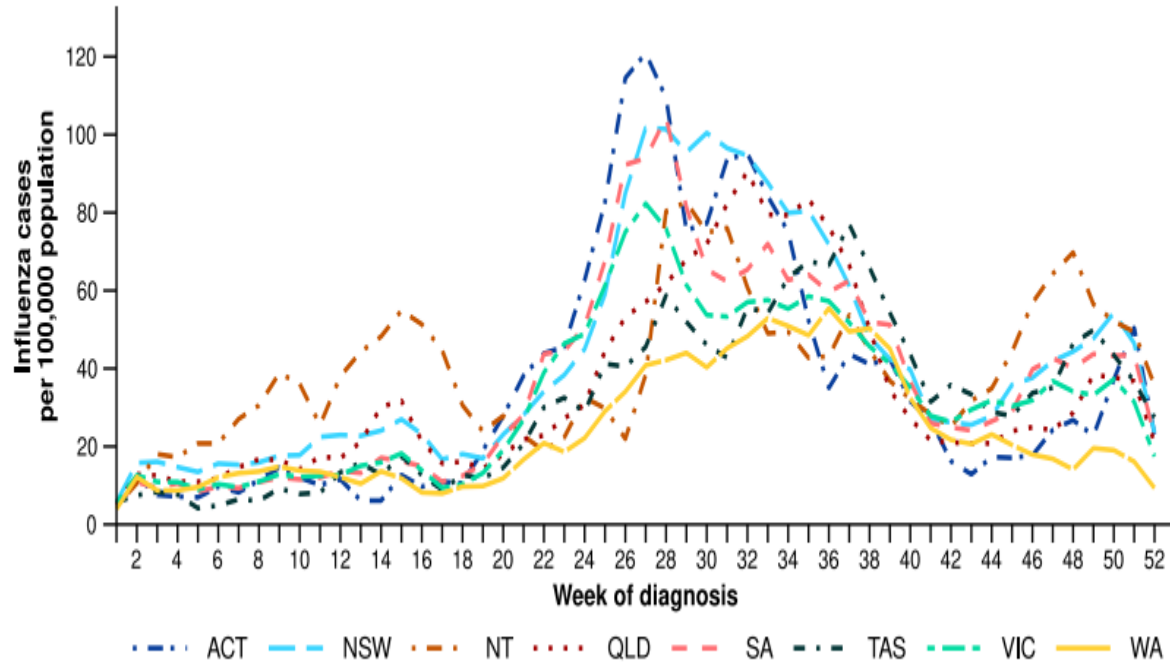
Influenza Epidemiology in Western Australia



Year	Number of notifications
2018	5,891
2019	23,404
2020	1,227
2021	37
2022	14,186
2023	21,331
2024	17,269
2025	36,507
2026 YTD	1,742

Influenza cases in Australia, 2025 to 2026 YTD

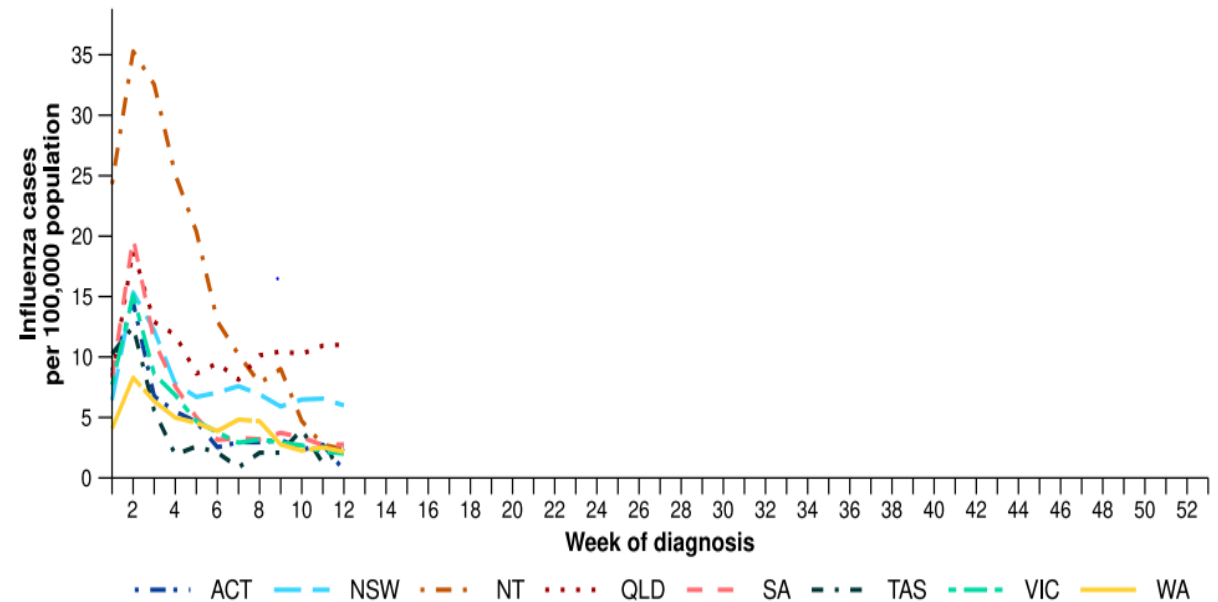
Figure 7: Notification rates* per 100,000 population for influenza cases by state or territory and week of diagnosis, Australia, 1 January to 28 December 2025



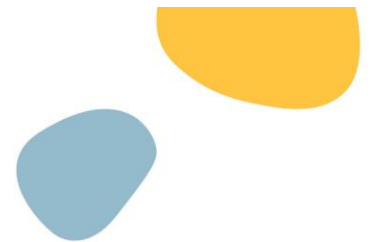
Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)

* Rate per 100,000 population for the given time period. Population data are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Estimated Resident Population (ERP) for the reference period June 2024, released 12 December 2024.

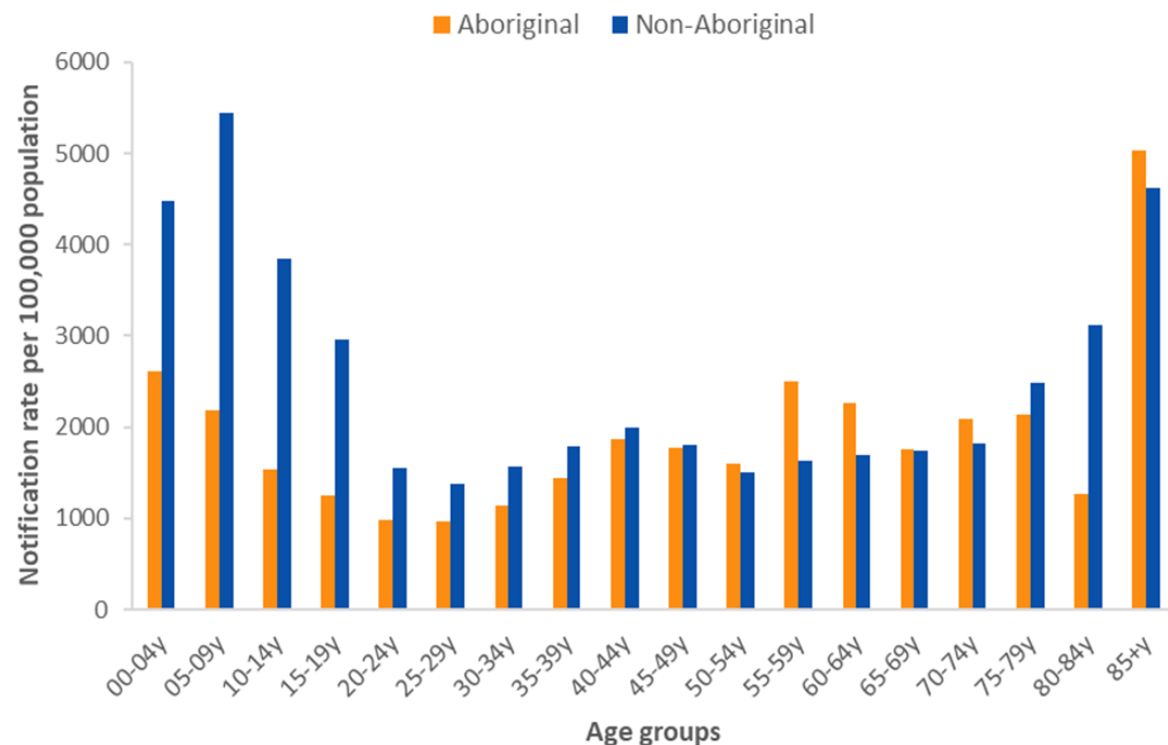
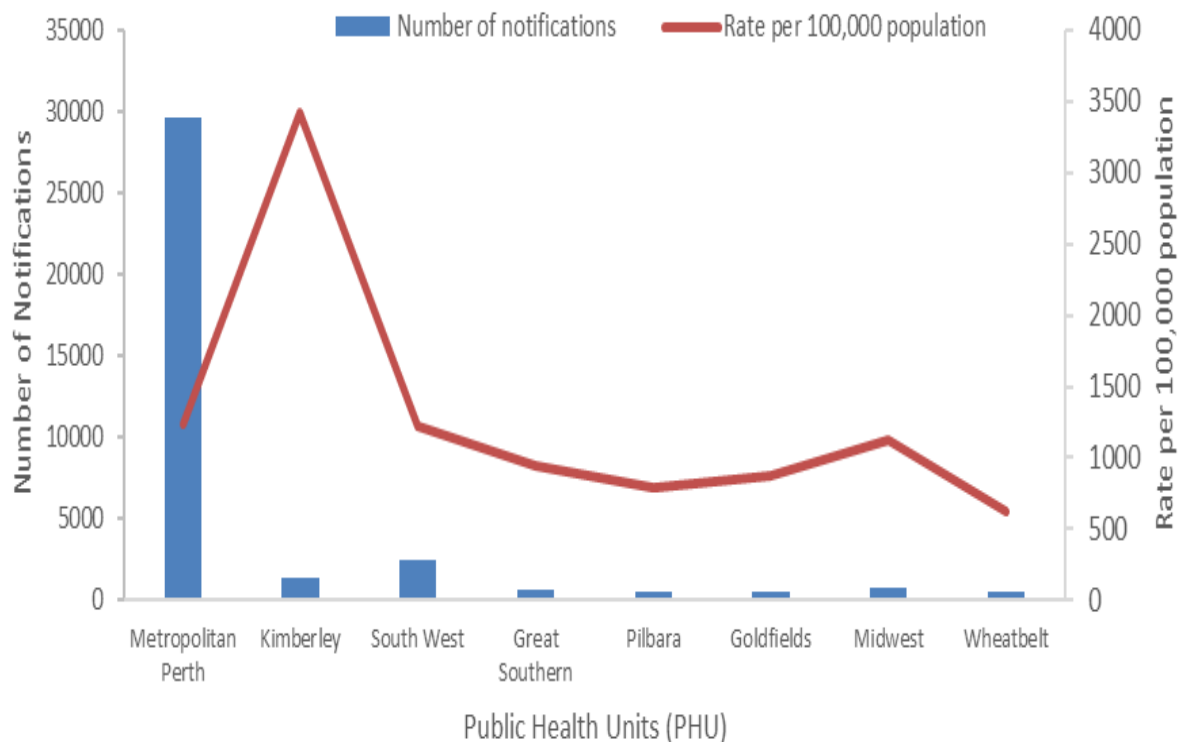
Figure 8: Notification rates per 100,000 population for influenza cases by state or territory and week of diagnosis, Australia, 1 January to 22 March 2026



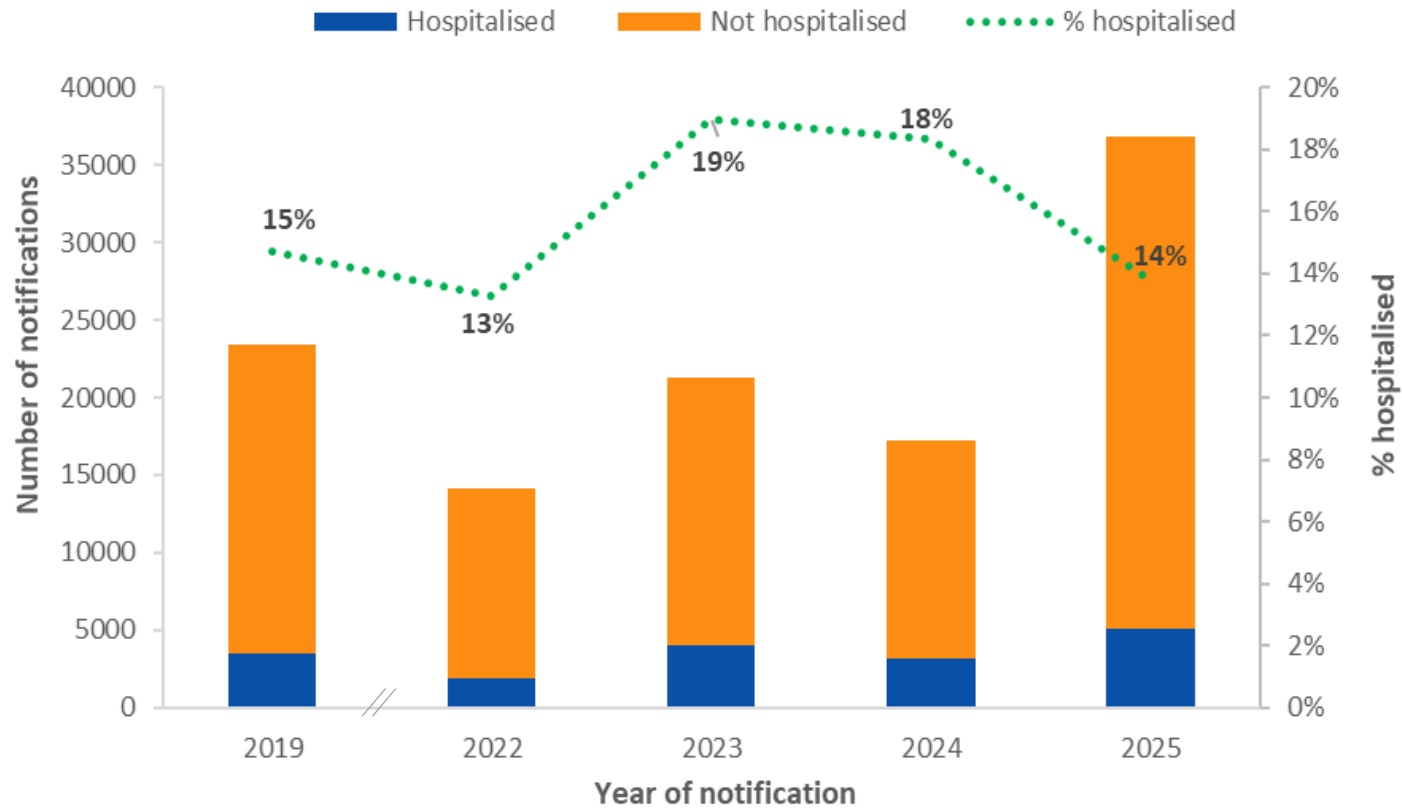
Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)



Influenza in WA by PHU, age and Aboriginality, 2025

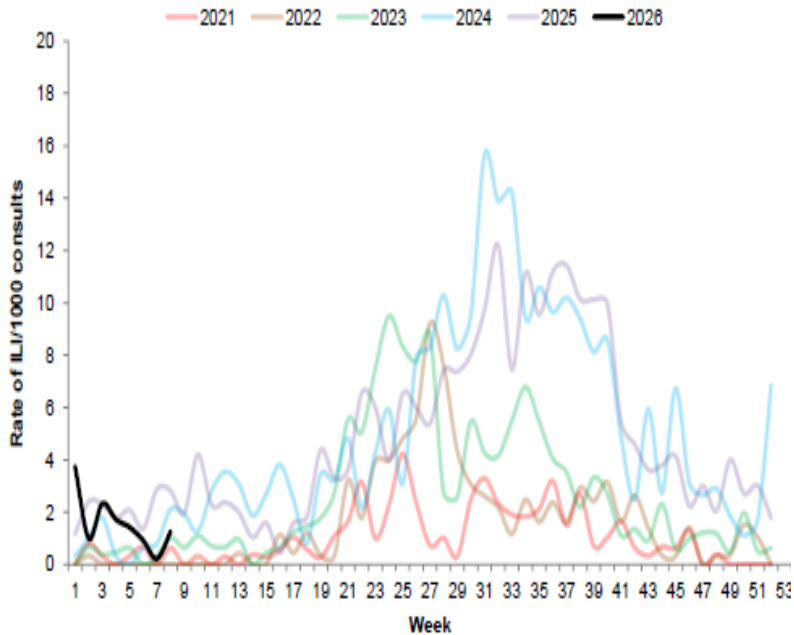


Influenza hospitalisation 2019 to 2025

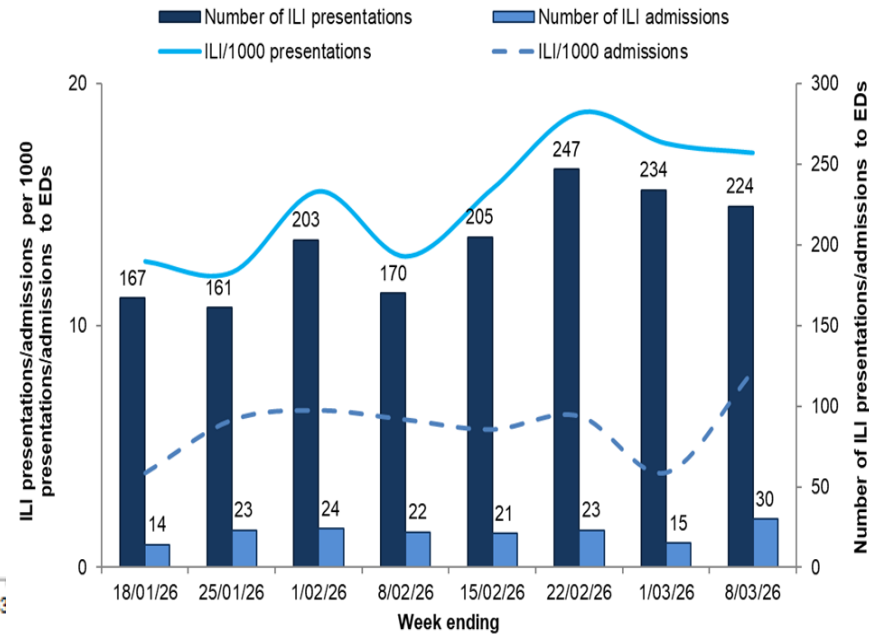


Year	Number of deaths
2019	103
2022	14
2023	21
2024	11
2025	18
2026 YTD	1

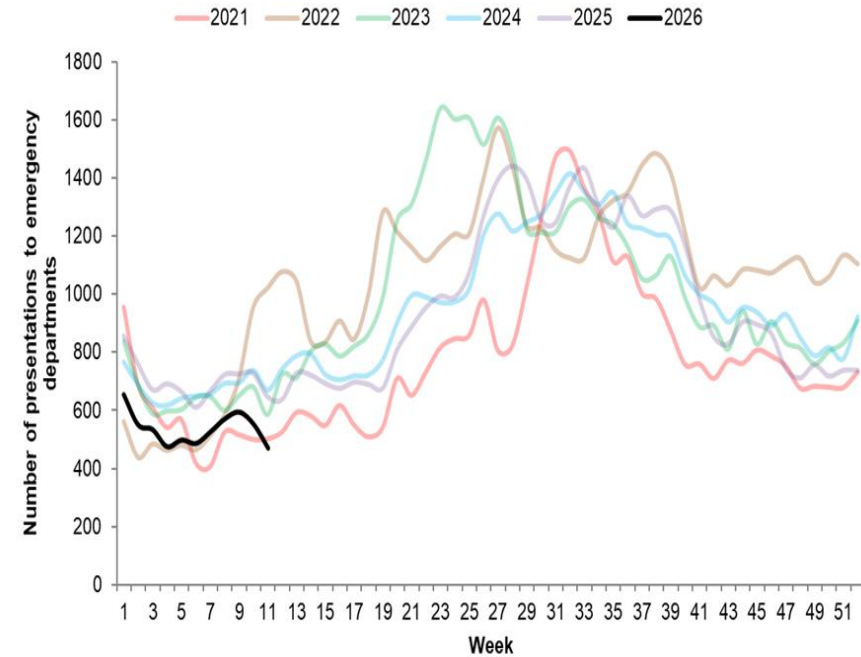
Sentinel surveillance indicators



Rate of ILI per 1000 consultations at sentinel GPs (Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network), 2021 to 2026 YTD

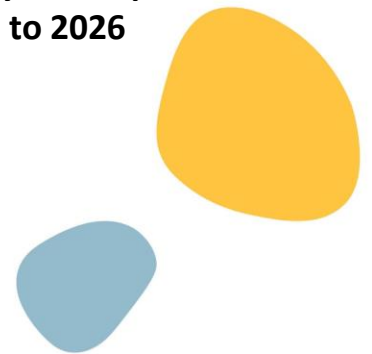


Number and rate of ILI presentations to EDs in the past eight weeks

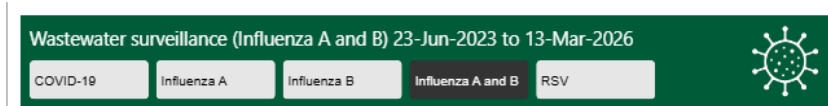
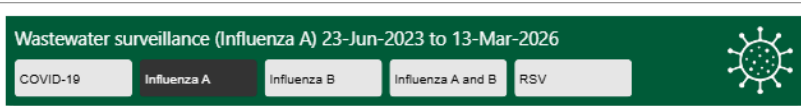


Number of respiratory illness presentations to EDs by week, 2021 to 2026

Source: Virus Watch report (https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Infectious-disease-data/Virus-Watch)



WA Wastewater Surveillance Program

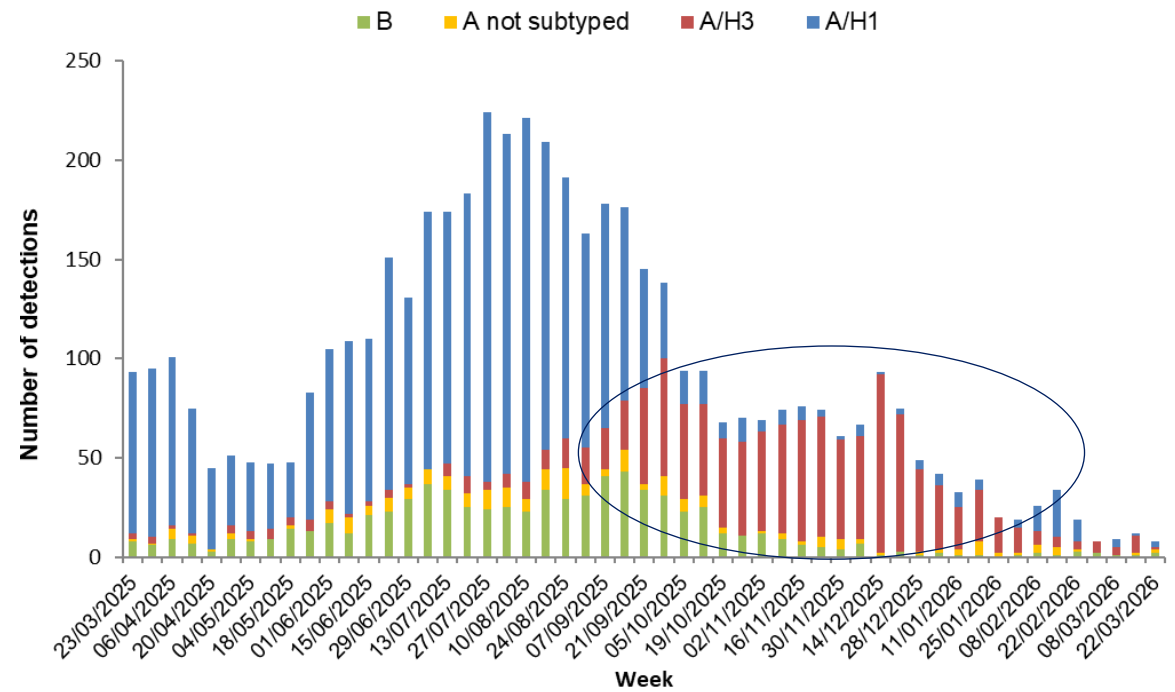
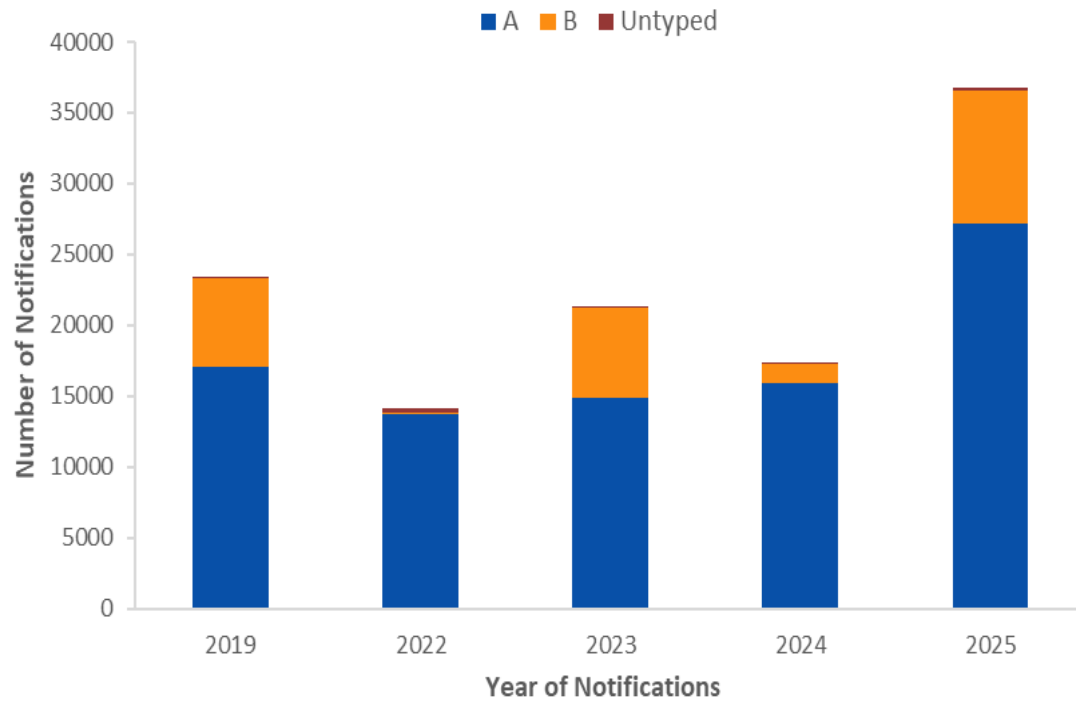


Influenza A virus concentration in wastewater and cases per 100,000 population

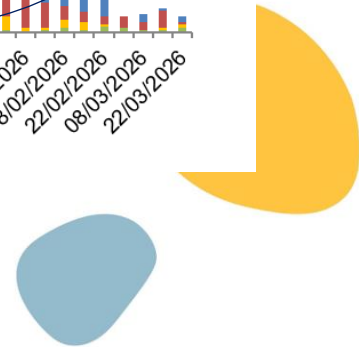
Influenza B virus concentration in wastewater and cases per 100,000 population

Influenza A and B virus concentration in wastewater and cases per 100,000 population

Influenza notifications in WA by year, type and subtype



Source: PathWest Laboratory Medicine



“Super K” variant strain

- Newly-emerged influenza A (H3N2) Subclade K
- Rapid rise of subclade K from low-level to geographical widespread after August 2025.
- Normal consequence of antigenic drift
- Mismatch between the 2025 Northern Hemisphere vaccine and this new subclade.
- Limited real-world vaccine effectiveness data

A new virus variant and lagging vaccinations may mean the US is in for a severe flu season

HEALTH · 8 MIN READ
UPDATED NOV 18, 2025
By Brenda Goodman



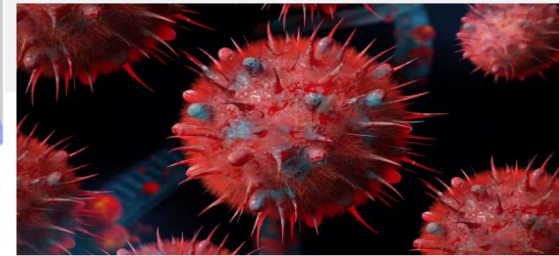
New data shows that flu vaccination numbers are falling behind where they typically are at this point in the year. (iStock/Bliss4U)

The United States may be heading into its second severe flu season in a row, driven by a mutated strain called subclade K that's behind early surges in the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan.

Last winter's season was extreme, too. The US had its highest rates of flu hospitalizations in nearly 15 years. At least 280 children died of influenza, the highest number since pediatric death numbers were required to be shared in 2004.

The 'Super-K' flu variant is spreading in Australia. Here's what makes it 'unusual'

The 'Super-K' flu — otherwise known as the subclade K variant — is spreading around the globe, including Australia.



The new flu variant is best understood as a drifted version of the familiar H3N2 virus, said epidemiology professor Adrian Listerman. Source: Getty / Moment

A new strain of influenza known as 'Super-K,' or the subclade-K variant, could be responsible for an unusual spring and summer boost in flu cases, epidemiologists say.

New Flu Variant Subclade K Spreading in Japan

Society Dec 2, 2025 11:19 (JST)

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Tokyo, Dec. 2 (Jiji Press)--A new flu virus variant called subclade K is spreading in Japan, a survey by the Japan Institute for Health Security has found.

The government-linked organization believes that the spread of the variant may be one of the reasons for this season's flu outbreaks hitting Japan earlier than the average year. Subclade K had already been confirmed overseas.

In and after September, the JIHS examined influenza patients infected with the H3 strain, which is prevalent in the country this season, and detected subclade K in 22 out of the 23 samples. The risk of severe symptoms from subclade K is almost the same as that from existing flu viruses, according to the JIHS.

The start of this season's outbreaks was the second earliest in the past 20 years. The number of patients per regularly monitored medical institution reached 51.12 in the week to Nov. 23 after topping the warning level of 30 in the preceding week.

'Massive increase' in flu cases hits hospitals and schools

1 day ago
Aimee Stanton, Data journalist and Catherine Lyst, BBC Scotland



Flu season has started earlier this year

Flu cases across Scotland tumbled by 45% in a week, rising from 555 to 805 laboratory-

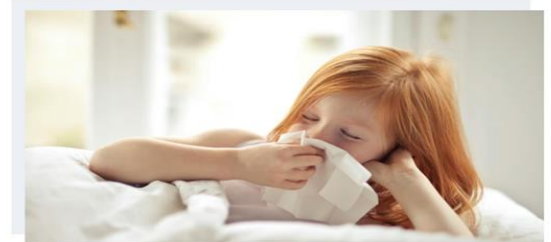
rate stood at 14.5 per 100,000 people -

79 to 391, as has test positivity, rising

1 at levels not previously seen at this

Canada sees spike in flu cases across the country, health agency reports

By Elanna Lee
Updated: November 28, 2025 at 6:56PM EST
Published: November 28, 2025 at 6:46PM EST



For the week of Nov. 22, cases of the flu were trending upwards, with 8.1 percentage of tests being positive. (Shutterstock)

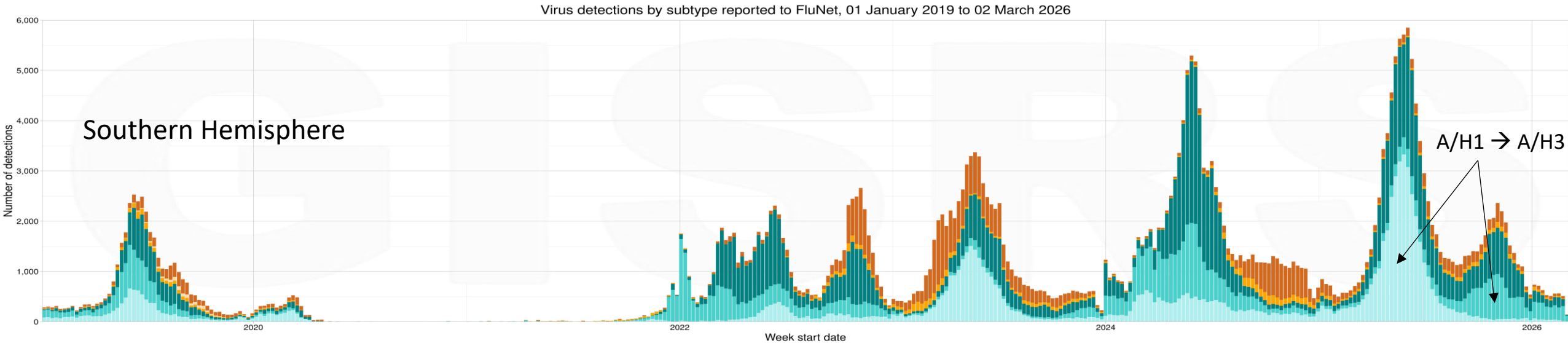
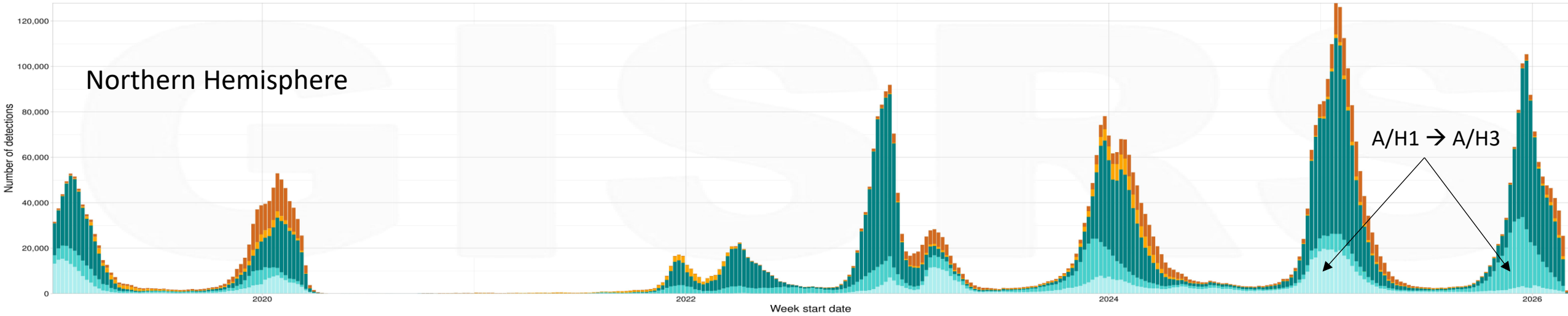
The latest numbers by Health Canada of reported influenza cases show a spike across the country.

For the week ending Nov. 22, cases of the flu were trending upwards, with 8.1 per cent of tests being positive. There were 2,102 total cases of the flu, compared to 1,394 the previous week. The population most affected by the flu were those 65 and older.

According to FluWatchers, a volunteer online health surveillance program that tracks activity of common viruses, 1.4 per cent of the 9,525 participants reported cough and fever.

The Antigenic Drift of Seasonal Influenza A (H3N2) and A (H1N1)

Virus detections by subtype reported to FluNet, 01 January 2019 to 02 March 2026



Influenza subtype A (H1) A (H1N1)pdm09 A (H3) A (H5) A not subtyped B (Victoria) B (Yamagata) B (lineage not determined)

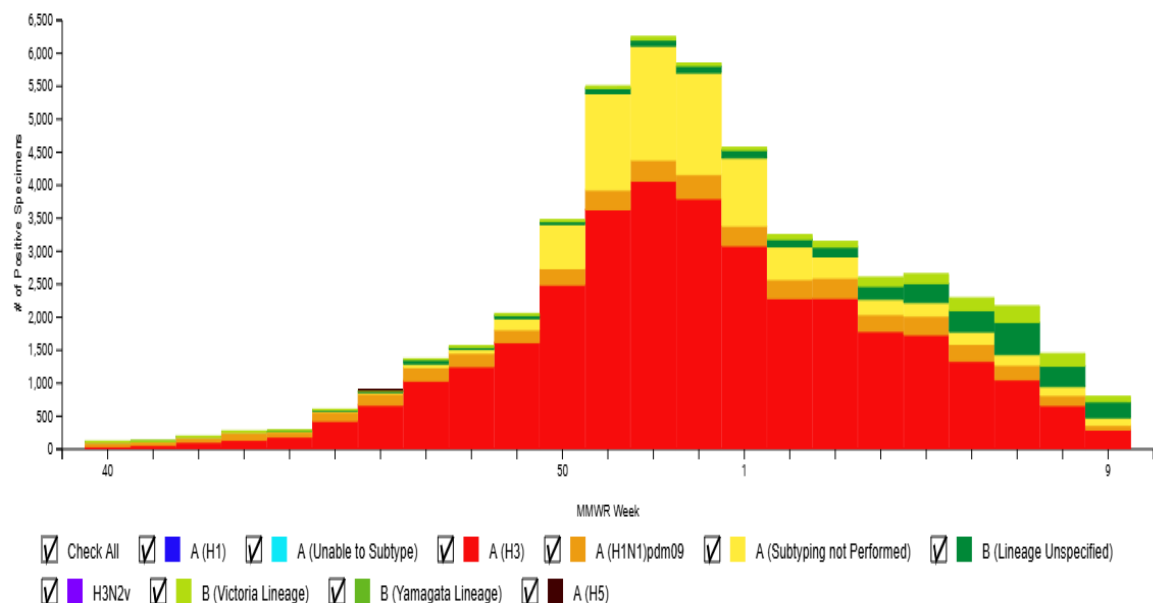
The chart above is displayed for Southern Hemisphere in all sites for week start dates 01 January 2019 to 02 March 2026



Global influenza epidemiology update



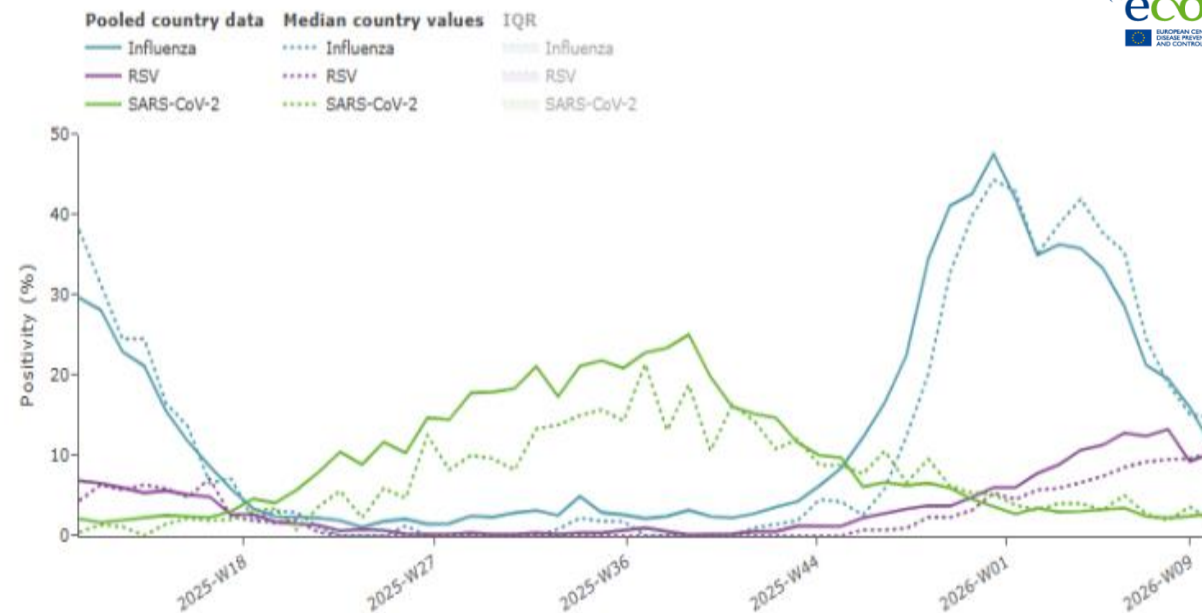
Influenza Positive Tests Reported to CDC by Public Health Laboratories, National Summary, 2025-26 Season, week ending Mar 07, 2026
 Reported by: U.S. Influenza/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories and ILINet



Source: Fluview Interactive Dashboard
 (<https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/fluview/fluportaldashboard.html>)
health.wa.gov.au



Figure 5. ILI/ARI virological surveillance in primary care - weekly test positivity



Source: ECDC Communicable Disease Threats Report for week 11 (7-13 March 2026)



Influenza surveillance in WA – Flu Survey

December 2024 to February 2025

- Unseasonal increase in influenza notifications in WA.
- SMS survey (<https://www.esendex.com/home>) sent to 1,030 cases with 65% (668/1,030) response rate.
- 46% of the surveyed influenza cases reported overseas travel.
- Limitation: No case control group

September and December 2025

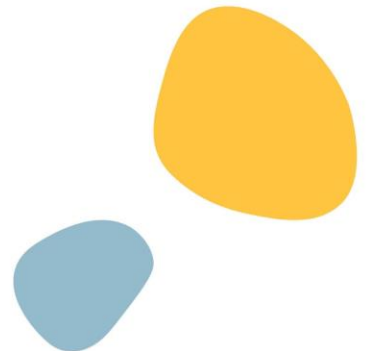
- Coincided with increase in A/H3 detections by PathWest.
- Addressed previous survey's limitation by including pertussis as control.
- SMS survey sent to 880 cases with 68% (594/880) response rate.
- Overseas travel was a significant risk for all types of influenza.



Summary

2025 Summary

- Record high notifications so far
- Highest influenza notification rates in <10 years and 80+ years
- Influenza A is the predominant subtype
- Shift from A/H1 to A/H3 observed in PathWest data from August 2025.
- Emergence of Super K – variant of A/H3 in Australia and globally.
- Two surveys indicated international travel was significant risk for all types of influenza.



Acknowledgements

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- Information and System Performance Department (ISPD), Department of Health WA
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- PathWest Laboratory Medicine of WA

