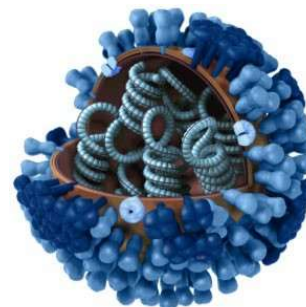




## Influenza Activity in the United States: 2025-2026 Season\*



2026 National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit  
May 19, 2026

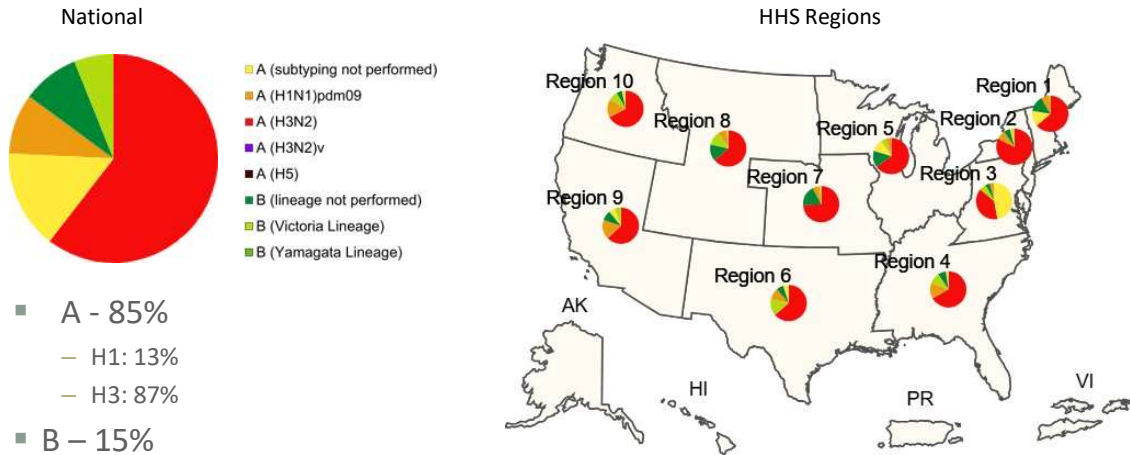
Alicia Budd, MPH  
Influenza Division  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

\* Activity through May 2, 2026; data as of May 7, 2026

### Season Highlights

1. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominant overall.
2. Influenza B viruses were reported more frequently during the later weeks of the season.
3. Nationally, influenza activity peaked in late December.
4. Peak levels of activity, burden, and severity were within historic norms overall.
5. Three novel influenza A virus infections were reported.

# 1. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominant overall.



# 1. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominant overall.

**IS 'SUBCLADE K' A SUPERFLU?**

**SUPER-FLU ON THE RISE**  
What the New H3N2 Wave Means for You and Your Family

**RISING FLU CASES**

**HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY**

- Get the vaccine
- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands

**SUPERFLU SYMPTOMS**

**'SUPER FLU' CASES HAVE DOCTORS ON EDGE**

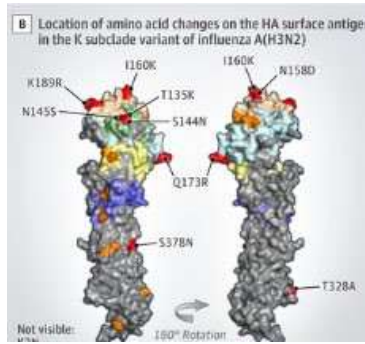
**'SUPER FLU' CASES RISING ACROSS US: WHAT TO KNOW**

**"Superflu" or same old flu? How subclade K influenza is playing out worldwide**

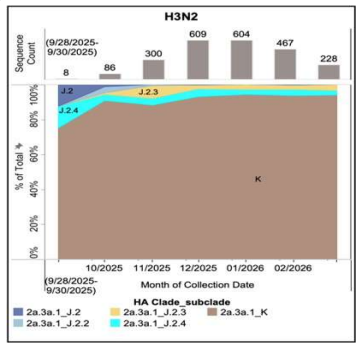
A fast-spreading strain of influenza A (H3N2), known as subclade K, has fuelled headlines warning of a possible "superflu". The reality is more nuanced, scientists say.

**HOW TO HANDLE NEW 'SUPER FLU' STRAIN**

# 1. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominant overall.



Subclade K

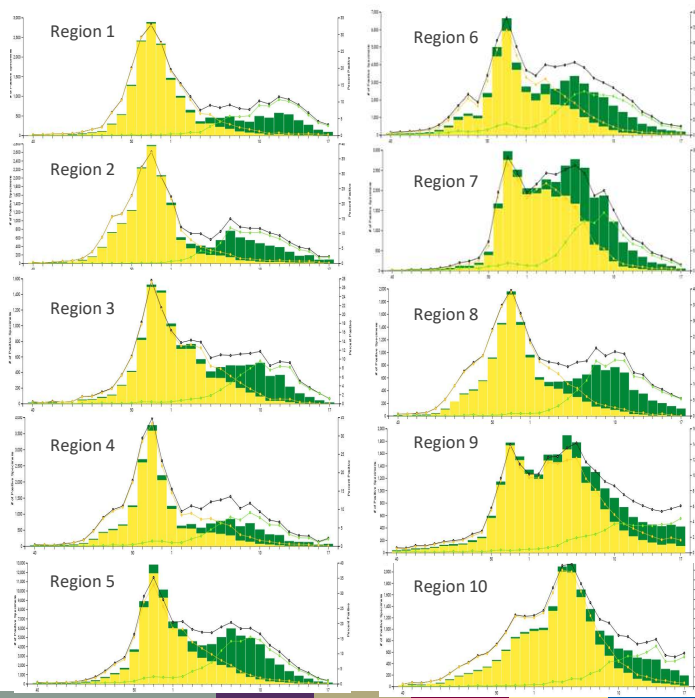
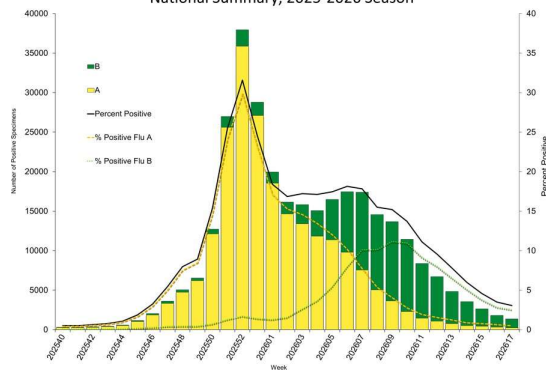


- Newly emerged subgroup of a well-established human season flu virus
- Multiple genetic changes in key areas of the virus.

Of the A(H3N2) viruses collected in the U.S. since 9/28/25 that underwent genetic characterization at CDC, 93% belonged to subclade K.

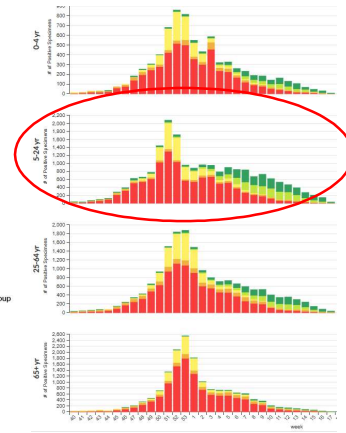
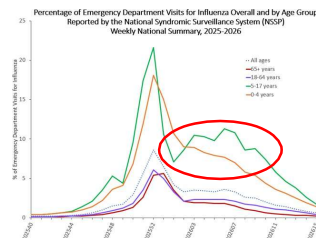
# 2. Influenza B viruses were reported more frequently during the later weeks of the season. (1)

Influenza Positive Tests Reported to CDC by U.S. Clinical Laboratories, National Summary, 2025-2026 Season



## 2. Influenza B viruses were reported more frequently during the later weeks of the season. (2)

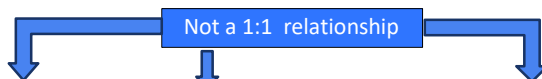
- Not uncommon - but less frequent since COVID-19 pandemic than during the 10 seasons pre-COVID
  - Pre-COVID: 60% (6 of 10 seasons)
  - Since COVID: 40% (2 of 5 seasons)
- Affecting 5–17-year-olds the most.
- Majority of circulating influenza B viruses were antigenically different than cell grown vaccine reference virus.



## Influenza Virus Characterization and Vaccine Strains

	Genetic Characterization					Antigenic Characterization		Cell Grown Vaccine Reference Virus 2025-2026
	Number Tested	HA Clade	Number (% of subtype) tested	HA Subclade	Number (% of subtype) tested	Number tested	Percent like cell-grown vaccine reference virus	
<b>A/H1</b>	887	5a.2a	3 (0.3%)	C.1.9.3	3 (0.3%)	223	99%	A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (subclade C.1)
		5a.2a.1	884 (99.7%)	D.3.1	253 (28.5%)			
				D.3.1.1	631 (71.1%)			
<b>A/H3</b>	2,417	2a.3a.1	2,417 (100%)	J.2	6 (0.2%)	355	2%	A/District Of Columbia/27/2023 (subclade J.2)
				J.2.2	5 (0.2%)			
				J.2.3	76 (3.1%)			
				J.2.4	83 (3.4%)			
				K	2,247 (93%)			
<b>B/Victoria</b>	1,009	3a.2	554 (100%)	C.3	5 (0.5%)	142	34%	B/Austria/1359417/2021 (subclade C)
				C.3.1	698 (69.2%)			
				C.3.3	14 (1.4%)			
				C.5.1	44 (4.4%)			
				C.5.6	32 (3.2%)			
				C.5.6.1	171 (16.9%)			
				C.5.7	54 (4.5%)			

## 2025-2026 Interim Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness Estimates



	Genetic Characterization		Antigenic Characterization
	HA Subclade	% of subtype or lineage tested	% like cell-grown vaccine reference virus
A/H1	C.1.9.3	0.4%	98%
	D.3.1	33.7%	
	D.3.1.1	65.9%	
A/H3	J.2	0.3%	2%
	J.2.2	0.3%	
	J.2.3	3.1%	
	J.2.4	3.7%	
	K	92.7%	
B/Victoria	C.3	2.7%	32%
	C.3.1	64.8%	
	C.5.1	6.7%	
	C.5.6	3.6%	
	C.5.6.1	16.1%	
	C.5.7	6.1%	

### Vaccine Effectiveness Estimates

- **Children and adolescents**
  - Outpatient – 38% - 41%
  - Hospitalization – 41%
- **Adults ≥ 18 years**
  - Outpatient – 22% - 34%
  - Hospitalization – 30%
- **Lower than recent seasons but still providing protection, even in a season with antigenically drifted viruses.**

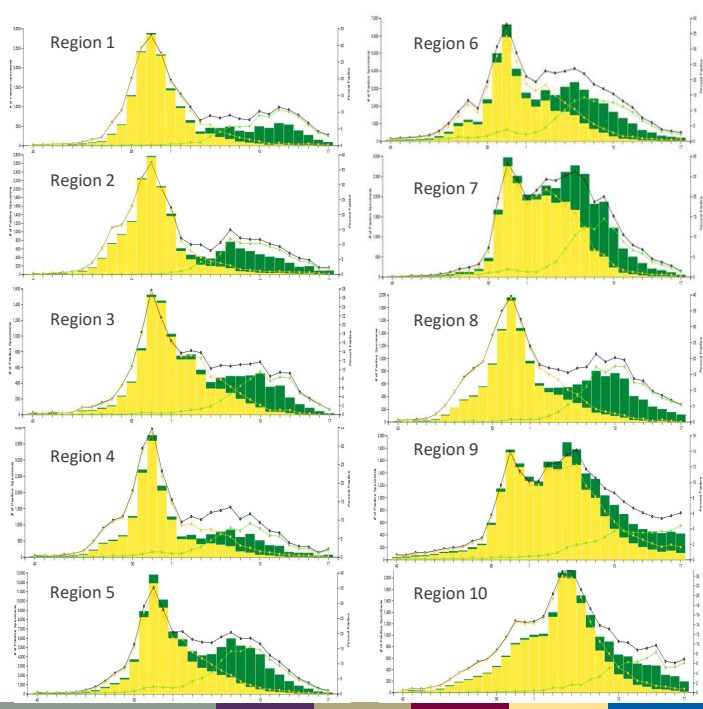
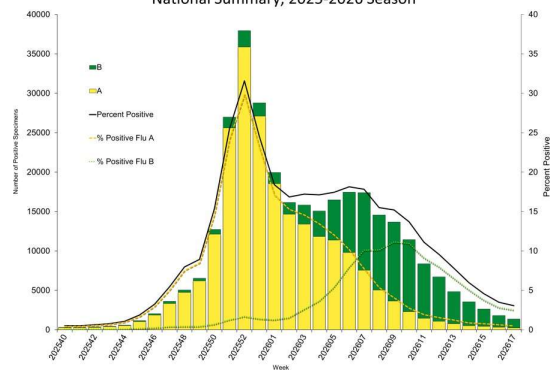
Maloney P, Reeves EL, Wielgosz K, et al. Interim Estimates of 2025–26 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness – United States, September 2025–February 2026. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2026;75:116–123. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7509a2>

## Influenza Virus Characterization and Vaccine Strains

	Genetic Characterization					Antigenic Characterization		Cell Grown Vaccine Reference Viruses	
	Number Tested	HA Clade	Number (% of subtype) tested	HA Subclade	Number (% of subtype) tested	Number tested	% like cell-grown vaccine reference virus	2025-2026	2026-2027
A/H1	887	5a.2a	3 (0.3%)	C.1.9.3	3 (0.3%)	223	99%	A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (subclade C.1)	A/Missouri/11/2025 (subclade D.3.1)
		5a.2a.1	884 (99.7%)	D.3.1	253 (28.5%)				
				D.3.1.1	631 (71.1%)				
A/H3	2,417	2a.3a.1	2,417 (100%)	J.2	6 (0.2%)	355	2%	A/District of Columbia/27/2023 (subclade J.2)	A/Darwin/1415/2025 (subclade K)
				J.2.2	5 (0.2%)				
				J.2.3	76 (3.1%)				
				J.2.4	83 (3.4%)				
				K	2,247 (93%)				
B/Victoria	1,009	3a.2	554 (100%)	C.3	5 (0.5%)	142	34%	B/Austria/1359417/2021 (clade C)	B/Pennsylvania/15/2025 (subclade C.3.1)
				C.3.1	698 (69.2%)				
				C.3.3	14 (1.4%)				
				C.5.1	44 (4.4%)				
				C.5.6	32 (3.2%)				
				C.5.6.1	171 (16.9%)				
	C.5.7	54 (4.5%)							

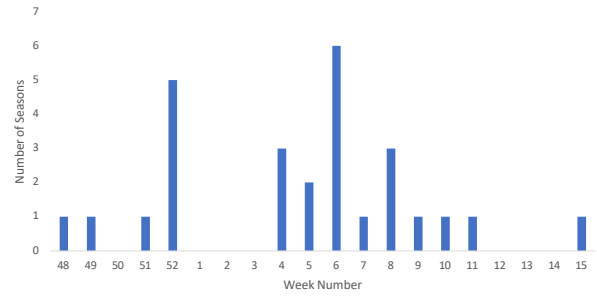
### 3. Nationally, influenza activity peaked in late December.

Influenza Positive Tests Reported to CDC by U.S. Clinical Laboratories, National Summary, 2025-2026 Season



### 3. Nationally, influenza activity peaked in late December.

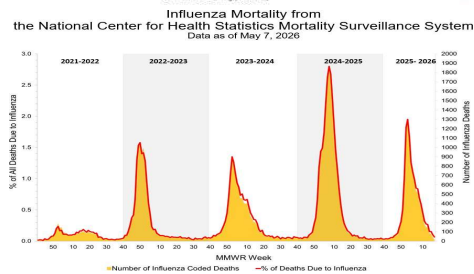
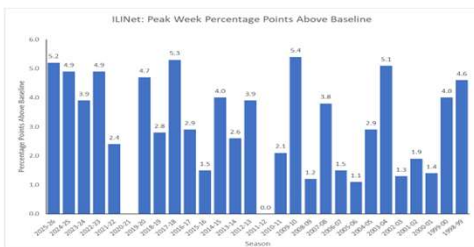
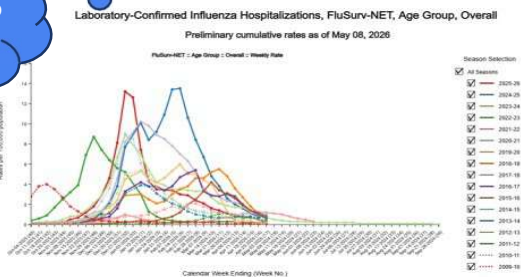
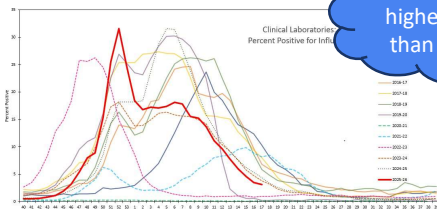
Influenza Activity Peak Week, 1997-98 through 2025-26\*



- Since the COVID-19 pandemic: 3 (60%) seasons peaked in December
- Before the COVID-19 pandemic: 5 (23%) seasons peaked in December (4) or November (1)

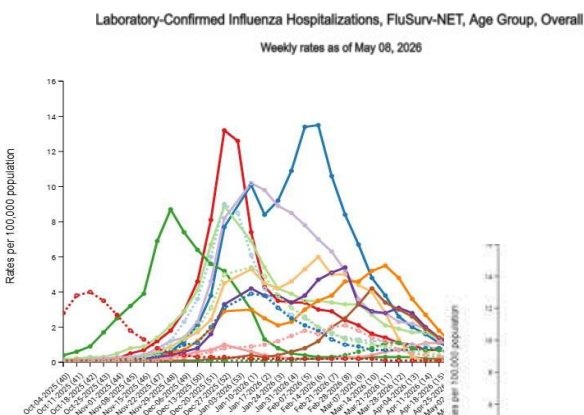
## 4. Peak levels of activity...were within historic norms overall.

Some closer to highest peak than others

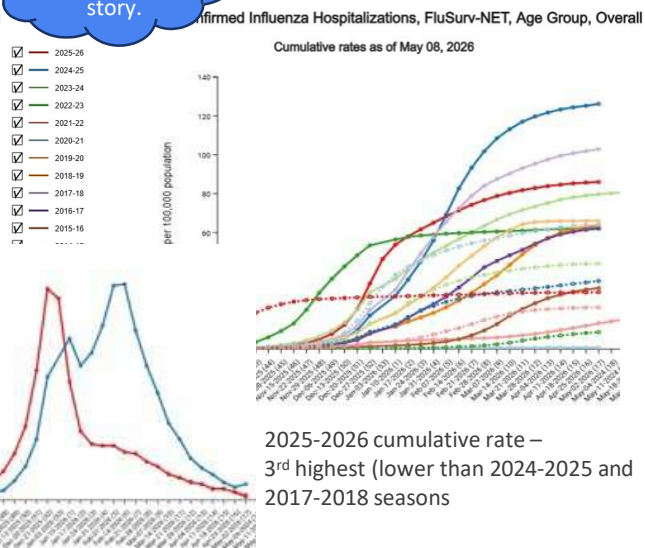


## 4. Peak levels of activity...were within historic norms overall.

Peak values only tell part of the story.



2025-2026 peak weekly rate – approximately tied with highest peak week activity

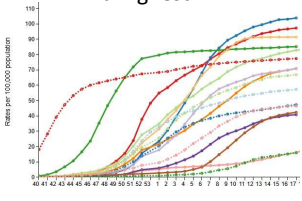


2025-2026 cumulative rate – 3<sup>rd</sup> highest (lower than 2024-2025 and 2017-2018 seasons)

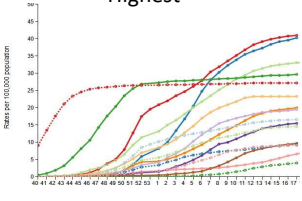
## 4. Peak levels of activity...were within historic norms overall.

Peak values only tell part of the story and age matters

0-4 year olds:  
2nd highest

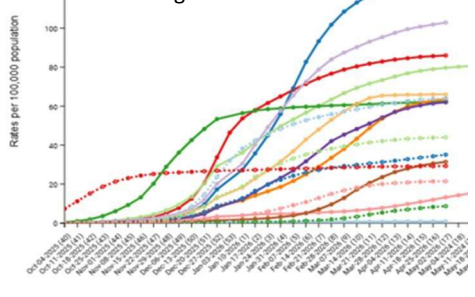


5-17 year olds:  
Highest

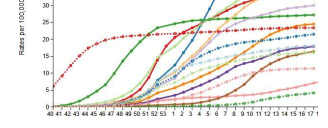


FluSurv-NET:  
Cumulative hospitalization rates by age group

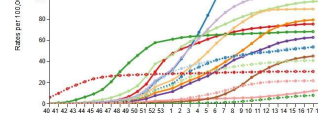
OVERALL:  
3rd highest



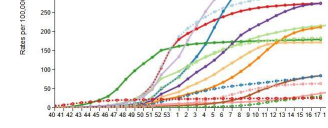
18-49 year olds:  
3rd highest



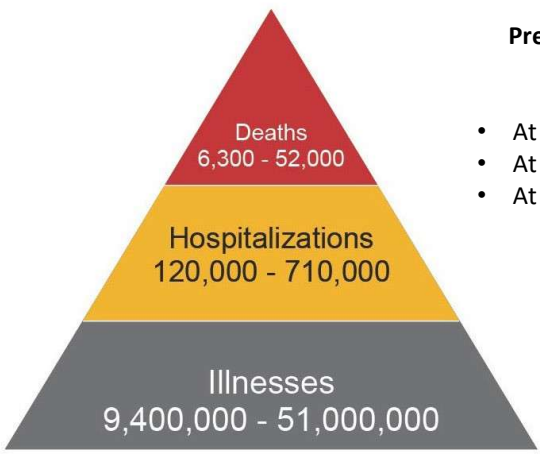
50-64 year olds:  
6th highest



65+ year olds:  
Tied for 4th highest



## 4. ...burden was within historic norms overall.



Estimated Range of Annual Burden of Flu in the US from 2010-2025

### Preliminary 2025-2026 Flu In-Season Disease Burden Estimates

- At least 24,000 deaths
- At least 380,000 hospitalizations
- At least 32 million illnesses

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/php/data-vis/2025-2026.html>

## 4. ...severity was within historic norms overall.



## 4. ...severity was within historic norms overall.

...but varied by age group

Children  
**High Severity**

Adults  
**Moderate Severity**

Older Adults  
**Moderate Severity**

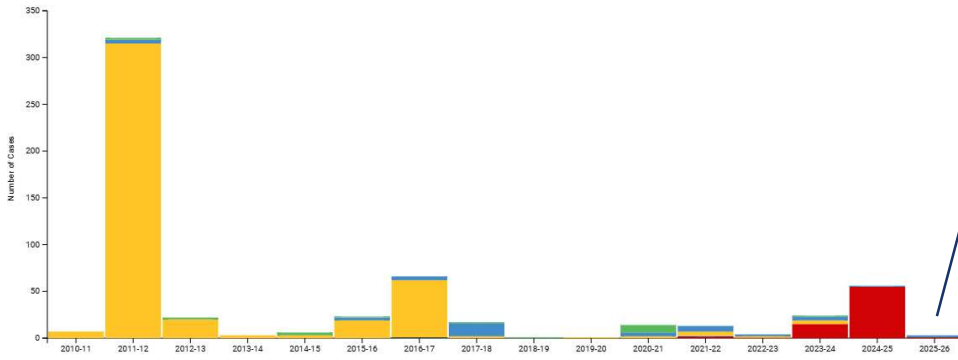
Assessment of Influenza Seasonal Severity by Age Group for 2003/2004 - 2024/2025 Seasons

Season	0 - 17	18 - 64	65+	All Ages
2003/04	Very High	Moderate	High	High
2004/05	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2005/06	Low	Low	Low	Low
2006/07	Low	Low	Low	Low
2007/08	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2008/09	Low	Low	Low	Low
2009/10	Very High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
2010/11	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2011/12	Low	Low	Low	Low
2012/13	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate
2013/14	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2014/15	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
2015/16	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate
2016/17	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2017/18	High	High	High	High
2018/19	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2019/20	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
2021/22	Low	Low	Low	Low
2022/23	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2023/24	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
2024/25	High	High	High	High

\*2020/21 flu season was not estimated because of minimal flu activity.

# Novel Influenza A Virus Infections

Cases By Season And Subtype



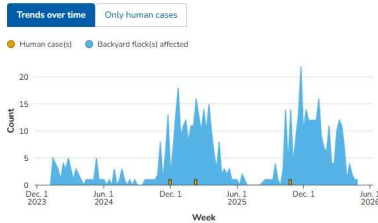
A/H1N2V –  
October 2025,  
April 2026

A/H5N5 –  
November 2025

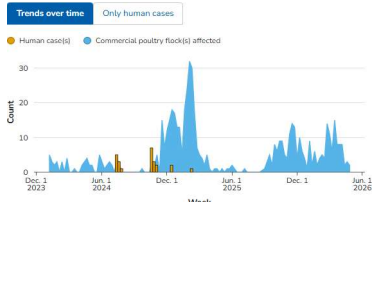
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Influenza A H1N1v	0	2	2	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	8	0	0	1	0	0	19
Influenza A H1N2v	0	4	0	0	0	3	4	14	0	4	6	2	4	1	2	44	
Influenza A H3N2v	7	315	20	3	3	19	61	2	0	1	2	5	1	4	0	443	
Influenza A H7N2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Influenza A H1v	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Influenza A H3v	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Influenza A H5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	55	1	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>581</b>

# Novel Influenza A Vigilance Never Ends

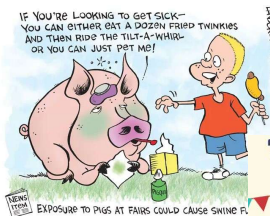
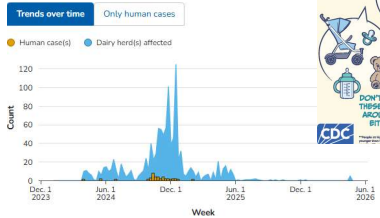
Influenza A(H5) affected backyard flocks and epidemiologically linked human cases



and epidemiologically linked human cases



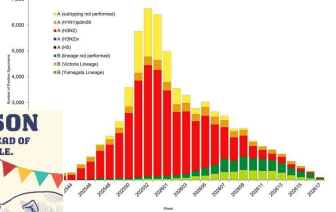
Influenza A(H5) affected dairy herds and epidemiologically linked human cases



**THIS FAIR SEASON**  
TAKE ACTIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU BETWEEN ANIMALS AND PEOPLE.



Influenza Positive Tests Reported to CDC by U.S. Public Health Laboratories, National Summary, 2025-2026 Season



## Summary

1. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were predominant overall
  - More than 90% were in the antigenically drifted subclade k.
2. Influenza B viruses were reported more frequently during the later weeks of the season. (not unusual)
  - Only ~ 30% antigenically similar to vaccine reference virus
  - School age kids impacted the most
3. Nationally, influenza activity peaked in late December.
  - Most common timing of peak influenza activity are Dec - Feb.
4. Peak, burden, and severity were within historic norms overall.
  - Peak is only part of the story
  - Impact varies by age group
5. Three novel influenza A virus infections were reported.
  - Stay vigilant!

Thank you!

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



<https://www.cdc.gov/fluview/index.html>

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

