

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 1/24/2025

 TO: Grant Co. Healthcare & Grant Co.
 Media

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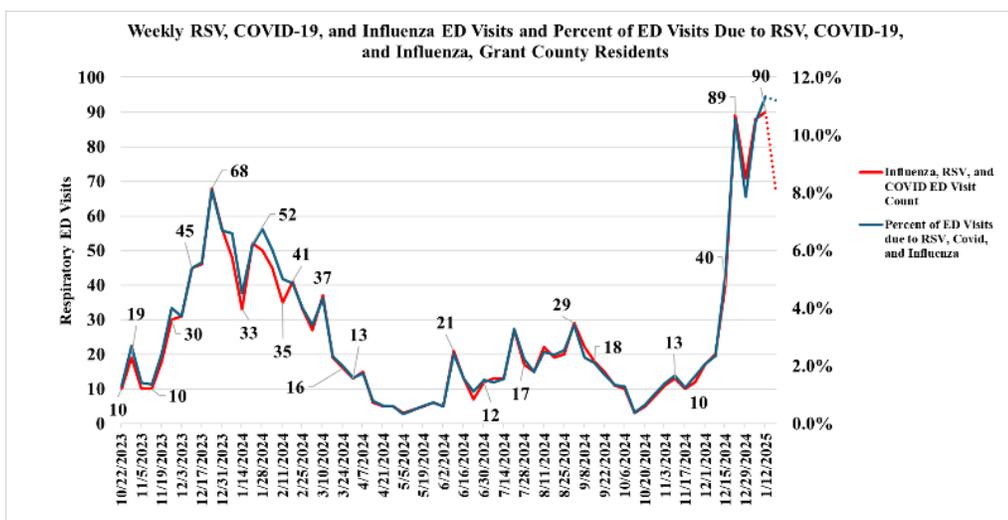
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2024/2025 Respiratory Illness Season Update

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health District (GCHD) continues to monitor the activity of respiratory illnesses in our communities, including influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. As the 2024/2025 respiratory illness season continues, GCHD urges you to take precautions to protect yourself and others.

Thus far, three flu-associated deaths have been confirmed in Grant County residents. The deaths occurred in a female in her 60s, a male in his 60s, and a male in his 70s. All had underlying health conditions.

“These deaths are a painful reminder of the high influenza activity seen in our country and in our area. Our hearts go out to the families and friends who are mourning their loved ones,” said Dr. Brzezny, Grant County Health Officer. “As the season continues, we urge you to take steps to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community,” he added.


Current Situation

Grant County: In mid December, over 11% of Grant County emergency department (ED) visits were associated with COVID-19, flu, and RSV. This marks the highest peak of respiratory illness-related ED visits in the past two respiratory illness seasons.

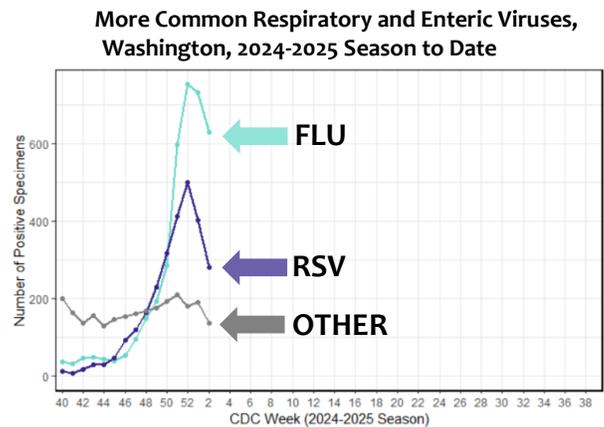
Though RSV and COVID activity has shown a slight decline this month, influenza activity still remains quite elevated.

GCHD has helped mitigate several influenza outbreaks and continues to monitor respiratory illness activity within healthcare facilities and schools.

The graph above shows a representation of combined total weekly cases of Grant County residents of RSV, Covid-19, and influenza that have tested positive in the Emergency Department within the region. Not all cases are being reported. The most recent week is a dotted line due to incomplete and pending data and should be interpreted cautiously. Data limitations apply.

Washington: Washington State Department of Health is reporting 43 laboratory-confirmed flu-associated deaths to date. Most deaths occurred in people with underlying health conditions. [Flu activity in Washington is currently “high”](#).

Flu has been the most common respiratory illness so far this season. Influenza A continues to be the dominant strain, however, it is not uncommon for a different strain, such as influenza B, to pick up the pace at this point in flu season.



Protect Yourself and Others

As the respiratory virus season continues, GCHD encourages everyone to continue taking the following precautions to lower the chance of getting yourself and others sick:

- Talk with your doctor about the COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines. The vaccines are safe and can help reduce your chance of severe illness.
- Avoid visiting healthcare facilities, especially long-term care (LTC) facilities, and vulnerable individuals if you are experiencing any respiratory symptoms. LTC and hospital residents are among the populations most vulnerable to respiratory viruses.
 - GCHD strongly recommends anyone visiting an LTC facility wear the most protective mask that also fits well.
- If you are not feeling well, stay home and test as soon as possible.
- Wash your hands well and often.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.

Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance

If you test positive for a respiratory virus, it is important to take steps to help prevent the spread of the virus. If you have a respiratory virus stay home and away from others until both of the following have been true for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and

- You have not had a fever (without using fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities, wear a protective mask and take added precautions for an additional 5 days.

Treatment

Antivirals are prescription medicines that can fight flu and COVID-19 viruses. Antivirals must be prescribed to you by a healthcare provider. It is very important that antiviral drugs are started as soon as possible to treat patients who are at [higher risk of serious complications or very sick with the flu](#). If your doctor prescribes antiviral medication, start it right away and finish the entire prescription.

Avian Influenza vs. Seasonal Influenza

GCHD is also closely monitoring the current avian influenza situation, commonly known as bird flu.

Avian influenza and seasonal influenza (flu) are different. **Seasonal flu** spreads easily among people every year, usually in the colder months. **Bird flu** mainly affects birds such as wild waterfowl and farm poultry and occurs year-round. It rarely infects humans but can be dangerous if it does. **There is no evidence showing that bird flu can spread from person to person.** No vaccine is currently available for bird flu. Bird flu symptoms are similar to seasonal flu. If you have flu-like symptoms and have had recent contact with sick or deceased birds, tell your healthcare provider.

For more information about bird flu visit: [Avian Influenza | Washington State Department of Health](#).

GCHD commits to informing the public of communicable diseases present in our community. Find respiratory illness season updates on [GCHD's website](#) or by following GCHD on Facebook. By taking these precautions, you can reduce the risk of respiratory illness.

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