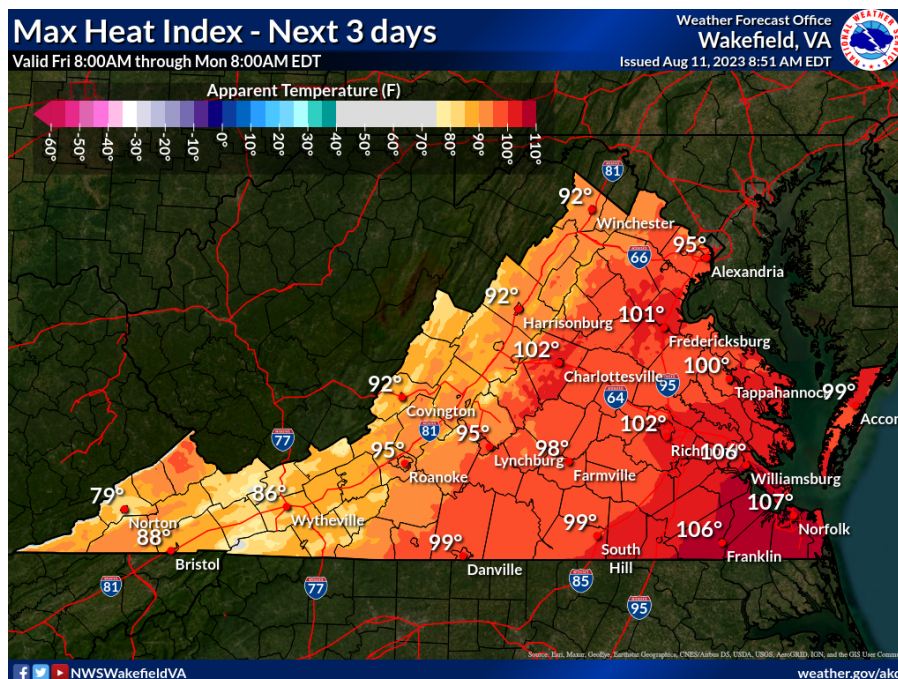


August 11, 2023

Key Takeaways

- COVID-19 indicators continue to rise. In Virginia, COVID-19 diagnoses at emergency departments and urgent care facilities have doubled in the last month. Also, for the first time since March, reproductive number estimates hint at potential future growth.
- A new COVID-19 variant EG.5 (Eris) is growing across the U.S. and potentially fueling new growth globally.
- Immunizations for COVID-19, flu, and RSV should be available before the start of respiratory illness season. Flu and RSV shots will reach pharmacies in mid-August, and COVID-19 boosters by early October.
- Violence against healthcare workers remains a crisis across the U.S. with an estimated 1,700 assaults per month nationally.
- Severe weather blanketed the East Coast last Monday spawning tornado warnings across much of Virginia.
- Wildfires in Canada continue to burn, though smoke is not expected to affect Virginia. Wildfires in Hawaii have devastated a small town and killed at least 55 people.

Key Figures



Source: [National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov/akq)

COVID-19

10%

Chance that the WHO will identify a new COVID-19 Variant of Concern in 2023. (Metaculus [forecast](#))

48%

Chance that the Virginia will experience a COVID-19 surge in 2023. (Metaculus [forecast](#))

Wildfires

737 of 1,129

The number of uncontrolled [wildfires](#) in Canada, out of the total number of active fires.

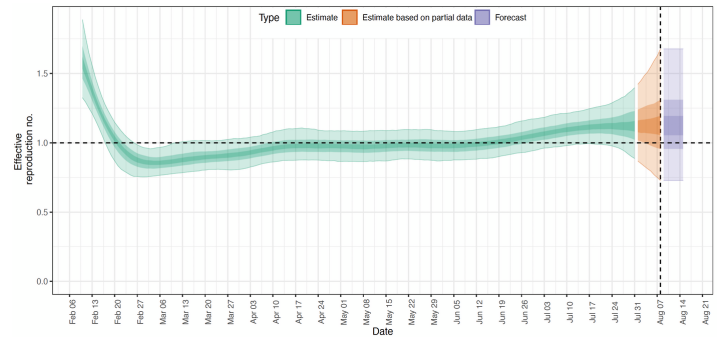
Spotlight: Respiratory Illness

Forecasts are italicized

Spotlight

- **Signs of early COVID-19 growth detected.** Across the U.S. surveillance suggests another COVID-19 wave may be on the horizon. In Virginia, Emergency Department diagnoses of COVID-19 have nearly doubled in a month. Hospital bed use for those with COVID-19 have increased, while hospital admissions remain level and viral loads in wastewater systems are in plateau. But reproductive number estimates are now suggesting growth for the first time since March.
- **Flu and RSV vaccines to be available shortly.** Across the U.S. pharmacies are rolling out this year's flu vaccine. The new RSV vaccine will also be available for adults over 60.
- **COVID-19 vaccine expected by October.** The CDC expects Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax to offer updated boosters for COVID-19 this coming fall. These vaccines will likely target the XBB.1.5 variant per FDA recommendations.
- **New COVID-19 variant "EG.5" on the rise.** Unofficially called "Eris", the new variant has grown to account for over 17% of new U.S. cases. The variant is thought to have some immune escape advantages, and may be contributing to the rise in cases across the globe.

Respiratory Diseases

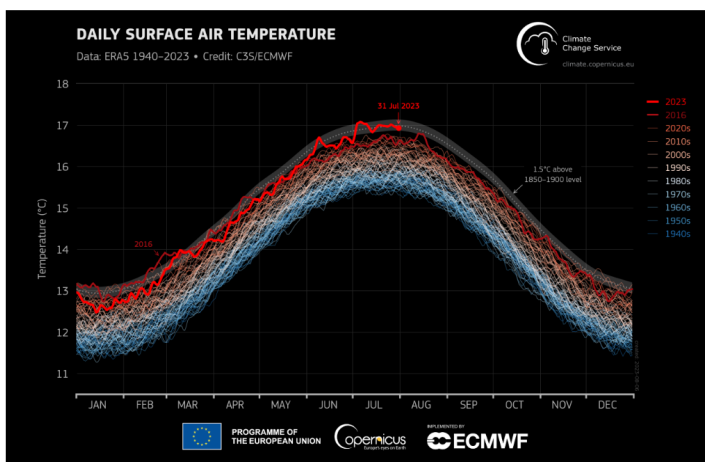


Region	Reproductive number estimate	Confidence interval	Trend forecast
State-wide cases	1.10	0.73 - 1.7	Likely increasing
State-wide hosp.	1.00	0.95 - 1.1	Likely increasing
Central	1.10	0.84 - 1.5	Likely increasing
Eastern	1.10	0.85 - 1.5	Likely increasing
Far SW	1.10	0.88 - 1.5	Likely increasing
Near SW	1.10	0.79 - 1.5	Likely increasing
Northern	1.10	0.81 - 1.4	Likely increasing
Northwest	1.10	0.87 - 1.4	Likely increasing

After a summer lull, indicators suggest COVID-19 is increasing in Virginia. Source: UVA Biocomplexity Slides.

Other News

- **CDC reports two Swine flu infections in Michigan.** Both patients had contact with pigs at recent agricultural fairs. The patients had two unrelated strains of Influenza A, both of which are common in swine.
- **NOAA predicts "above normal" 2023 Atlantic hurricane season.** This is an increase over the prior "near-normal" prediction from May. NOAA expects 2-5 major hurricanes.



Globally, July was the hottest month on record, highlighting a long-term trend of rising global temperatures. Virginia had 1,359 heat-related visits to emergency facilities in July, the highest monthly total recorded since 2015. Source: Copernicus.

- **Healthcare violence remains a national dilemma.** Recent attacks by visitors against employees of hospitals in Oregon and Florida highlight the growing problem of violence against healthcare workers. A study of nursing personnel suggests that on average American healthcare workers suffer over 1,700 assaults month.
- **Cyberattacks cause multi-state hospital disruptions.** The attack which targeted Prospect Medical Holdings affected primary care clinics and hospitals in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania.
- **Eastern U.S. rocked by severe weather.** Areas from South Carolina to New York, including large swaths of Virginia, were struck by severe thunderstorms on Monday, leaving millions without power and two dead.
- **Fanned by hurricane Dora, flash wildfires destroyed towns and killed at least 55 people in Hawaii.** Governor Josh Green called the fires 'likely the largest natural disaster in Hawaii state history'. Wildfires are rare in Hawaii; however, Hurricane Lane also caused wildfires in 2018.
- **The USDA reported several detections of H5N1 avian influenza** in wild birds and mammals, the first detections since May. Health officials in South Korea have also detected the virus in duck and chicken flavored cat foods.