

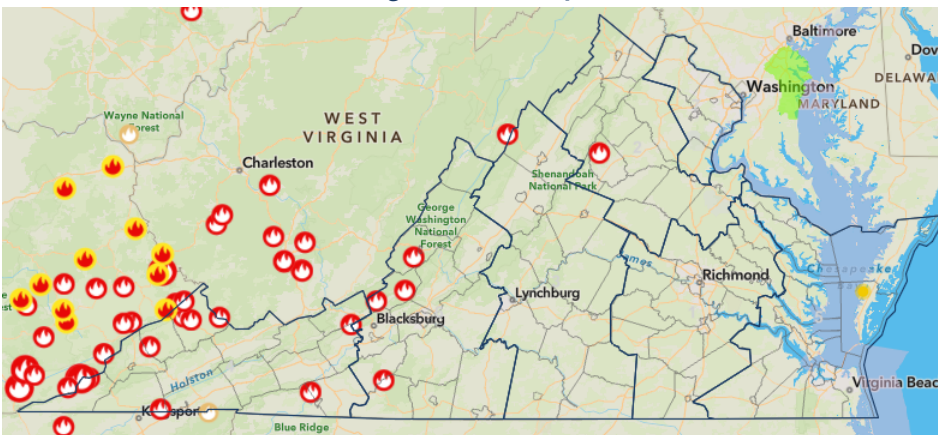
November 9, 2023

Key Takeaways

- The Governor’s Office declared a state of emergency in response to wildfires and dry conditions in Virginia. The wildfire smoke is affecting air quality across much of the Commonwealth. Virginia’s fall wildfire season ends November 30.
- COVID-19 surveillance continues to suggest a plateau in overall rates. Hospitalization rates remain low. Forecasts suggest they will remain static until December.
- RSV activity continues to increase steadily in the American southeast. Detection rates are growing more slowly in Virginia.
- Despite efforts to bolster production, the domestic supply of PPE has not yet caught up to demand.

Key Figures

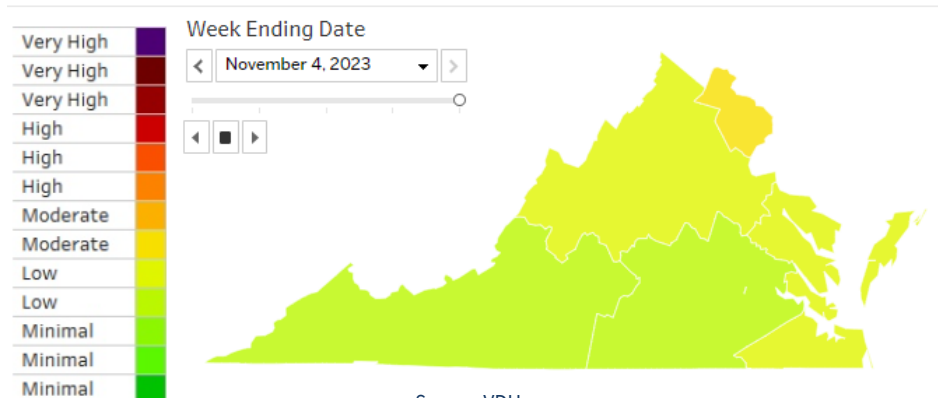
Virginia Wildfire Map



Source: [VDEM](#)

Regional Flu Activity Levels

Intensity Level by Region, Week ending November 4, 2023



Source: [VDH](#)

COVID-19

Low

Characterization of COVID-19 hospital admissions and hospital occupancy in Virginia as of Nov 3.

Influenza

Low

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Nov 4.

1 of 5

Virginia regions with Moderate influenza activity levels, as of Nov 4.

Wildfires

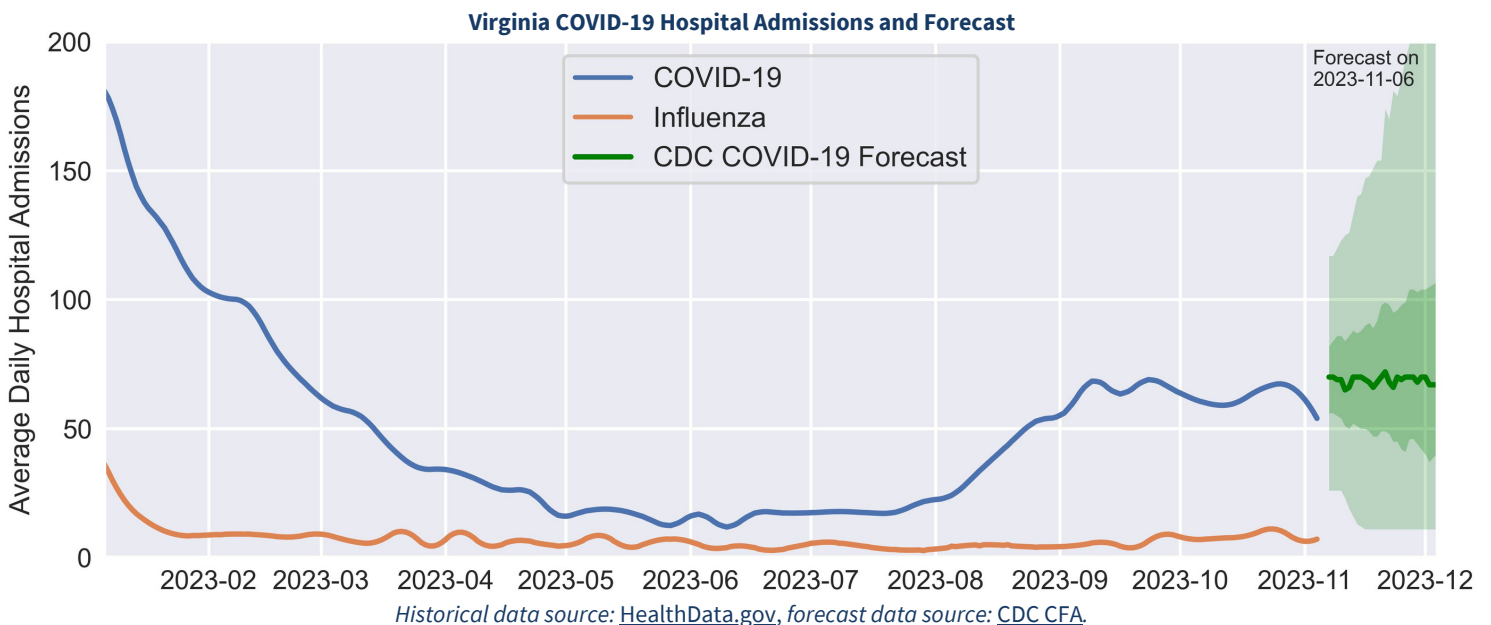
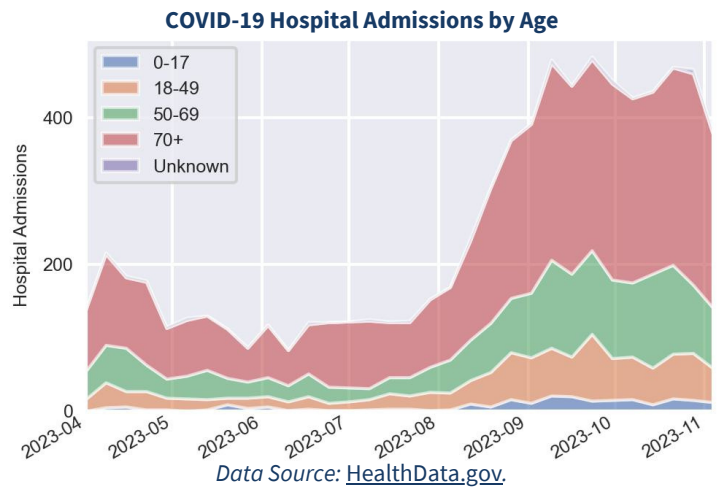
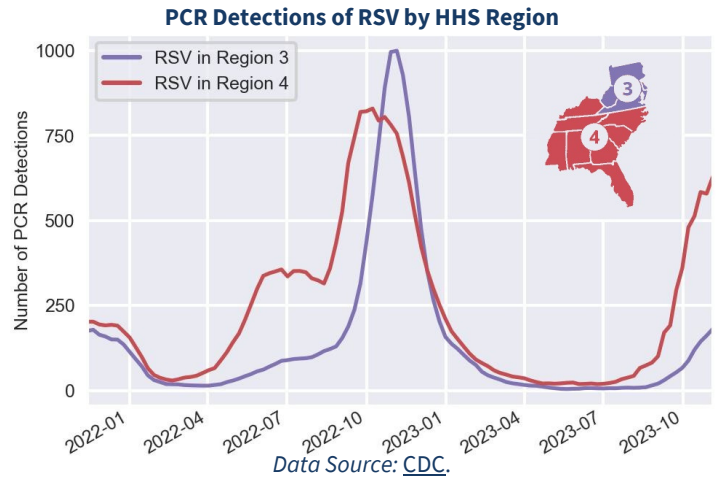
10,001

The number of acres burned in Virginia’s fall wildfire season

Spotlight: Wildfires

Respiratory Illness

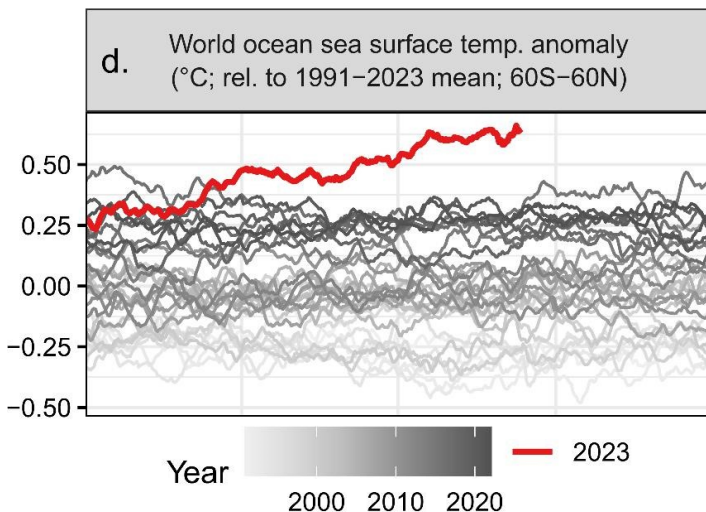
- **COVID-19 data hints at a rate plateau.** While [COVID-like illness visits](#) to the emergency department (ED) dropped this week, the overall rate of [COVID-19 diagnoses at the ED](#) has been largely unchanged since early October. [Hospitalizations](#) are down this week, but CDC forecasts suggest rates will remain static until early December.
- **RSV continues to surge in Southeast, rising slower in Virginia.** Data from HHS region 4 suggests the American Southeast may be nearing a seasonal peak of RSV. This region’s RSV season usually precedes that of Region 3 (including Virginia) by a month or two.
- **CDC to expand airport surveillance of respiratory viruses.** A pilot study will collect samples at seven major U.S. airports looking for “[flu, RSV, and other respiratory viruses](#).”
- **Domestic PPE supply remains limited.** Despite federal grants, American production of masks, gloves, and gowns [has yet to catch up to demand](#), leaving healthcare providers to rely on imported sources.
- **COVID-19 vaccine difficulties persist.** Distribution issues for the 2023-24 Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been resolved, but [availability of pediatric mRNA doses remains limited](#). Adult doses of the [Novavax](#) vaccine are difficult to find presently.



Spotlight

- The Governor’s Office declared a state of emergency due to existing and potential wildfires, including two fires that jumped containment lines in recent days. North Carolina has also declared a state of emergency due to wildfires, along with local officials in Harlan county, Kentucky.
- **80 wildfires have burned 10,001 acres since Oct 15.** The Quaker Run fire, in Madison county, has burned 3,350 acres and is 40% contained. The Tuggles Gap fire, in Patrick county, has burned 850 acres and is 35% contained. Another fire, the Yokum Creek fire spans Lee county, Virginia and Harlan County, Kentucky, has burned 1,500 acres and is about 50% contained.
- **The Salem and Abingdon regions are at high fire danger today.** Virginia’s other four regions are at moderate fire danger. Conditions are expected to ease tomorrow, with the Abingdon region returning to moderate fire danger, and the rest of the state at low.

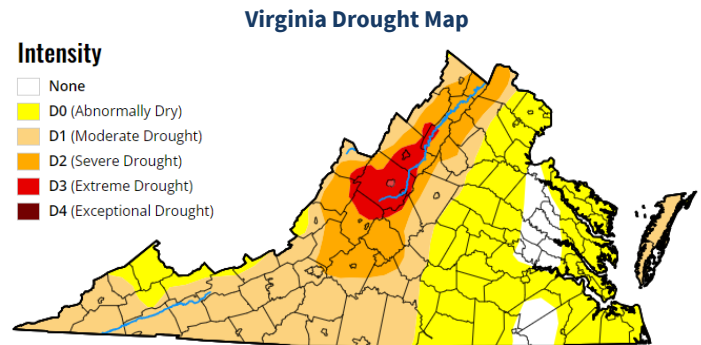
Other News



A recent paper describes a set of climate ‘vital signs.’ The paper notes an ‘extraordinary series of climate-related records’ occurring in 2023, along with ‘deeply concerning patterns of climate-related disasters.’ Image Source: BioScience

- **Oregon has had 17 mpox cases since July 20, an uptick over previous months.** Public health officials encourage at-risk groups to complete the vaccination series as a preventative measure.

Wildfires



Much of Virginia continues to experience drought conditions, with some sections of Northwest Virginia experiencing extreme drought. Image Source: US Drought Monitor

- **Smoke from wildfires in the Southeast US is beginning to affect air quality.** With the exception of a portion of Northwest Virginia, air quality is moderate across Virginia. The Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program issued a hiking advisory for two trails in the Shenandoah National Park, and a special statement for nearby localities.
- **Super fog blamed for another deadly crash in New Orleans.** Though smaller than the crash on Oct 23, this crash involved multiple vehicles, caused one death, and shutdown Interstate 10 for hours.
- **Cornell University closed its campus in after a student made online threats,** highlighting the strain the Israel-Palestine conflict is placing on colleges and universities. Meanwhile, a man died in California during a confrontation between protest groups.
- **The United Kingdom is experience elevated levels of Cryptosporidium.** Exceedance of expected levels began in September, and has approached 500 cases per week and is geographically widespread. Although no single source has been identified, the outbreak may be linked to international travel to Spain and other Mediterranean countries.
- **Measles rages across the Philippines.** The nation’s Department of Health reports 1,829 cases in 2023, a near 300% increase in incidence this year. The nation suffered over 48,500 cases during a 2019 outbreak.