

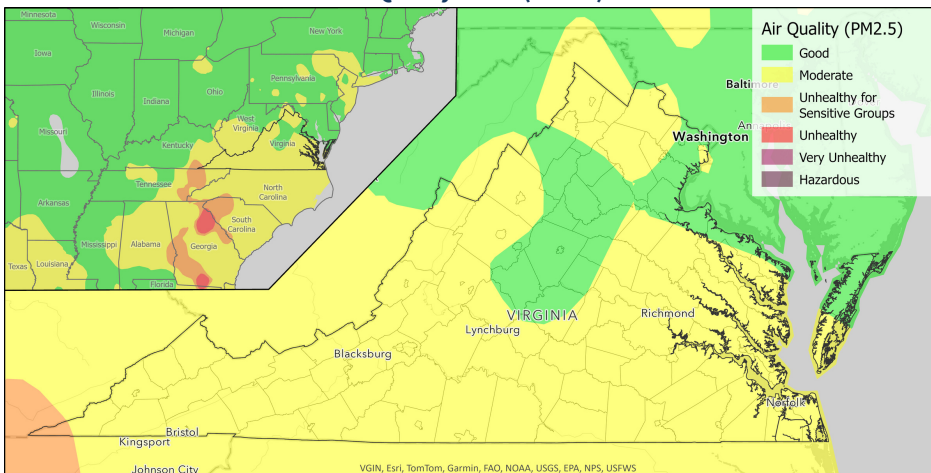
March 15, 2024

Key Takeaways

- Influenza activity stabilizes while COVID-19 rates continue decreasing. Statewide activity for both remains high. However, COVID-19 activity has shown sustained declines for several weeks. Influenza activity is down slightly, but models suggest it is still stable.
- Hospitalizations for COVID-19 and flu are still decreasing slowly. Models imply that both trends will stabilize. Hospital admissions rates for both viruses are expected to remain level through April.
- Gastrointestinal disease activity is increasing. Norovirus detections in Virginia’s census region rival those seen during the peak of the 2023 season. Virginia is also dealing with elevated rotavirus activity.
- Measles continues to cause sporadic outbreaks across the United States. It is also causing significant morbidity across the developing world.

Key Figures

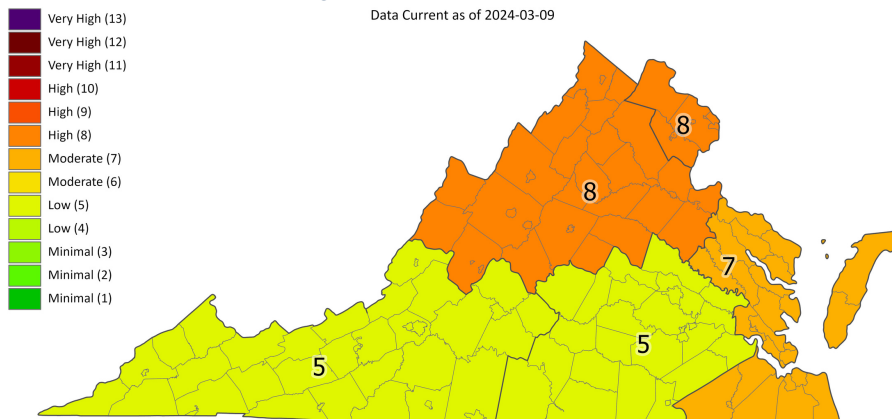
Air Quality Index (PM2.5)



Data Source: [EPA](#) as of 2024-03-15 at 1:15 PM.

Virginia Influenza Intensity Level

Data Current as of 2024-03-09



Data Source: [VDH](#).

COVID-19

Low / Low

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 related hospital admissions / hospital bed occupancy as of Mar 9.

Influenza

High

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Mar 9.

2

Virginia regions with High influenza intensity levels, as of Mar 9.

Norovirus

14%

Norovirus test positivity in the Southern US Census Region, which includes Virginia.

Measles

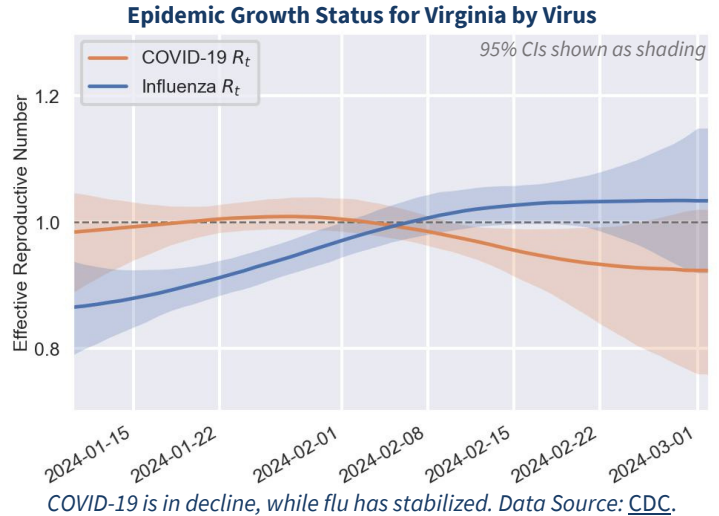
45

The number of measles cases reported to the [CDC](#) in 2024.

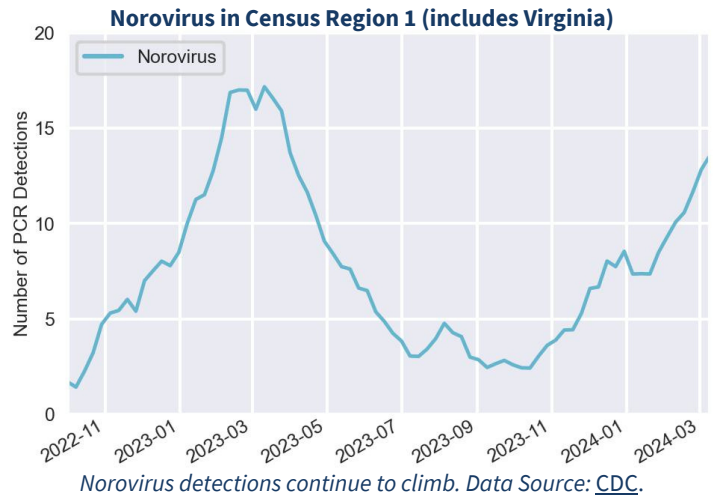
Spotlight:
Measles

Seasonal Illness

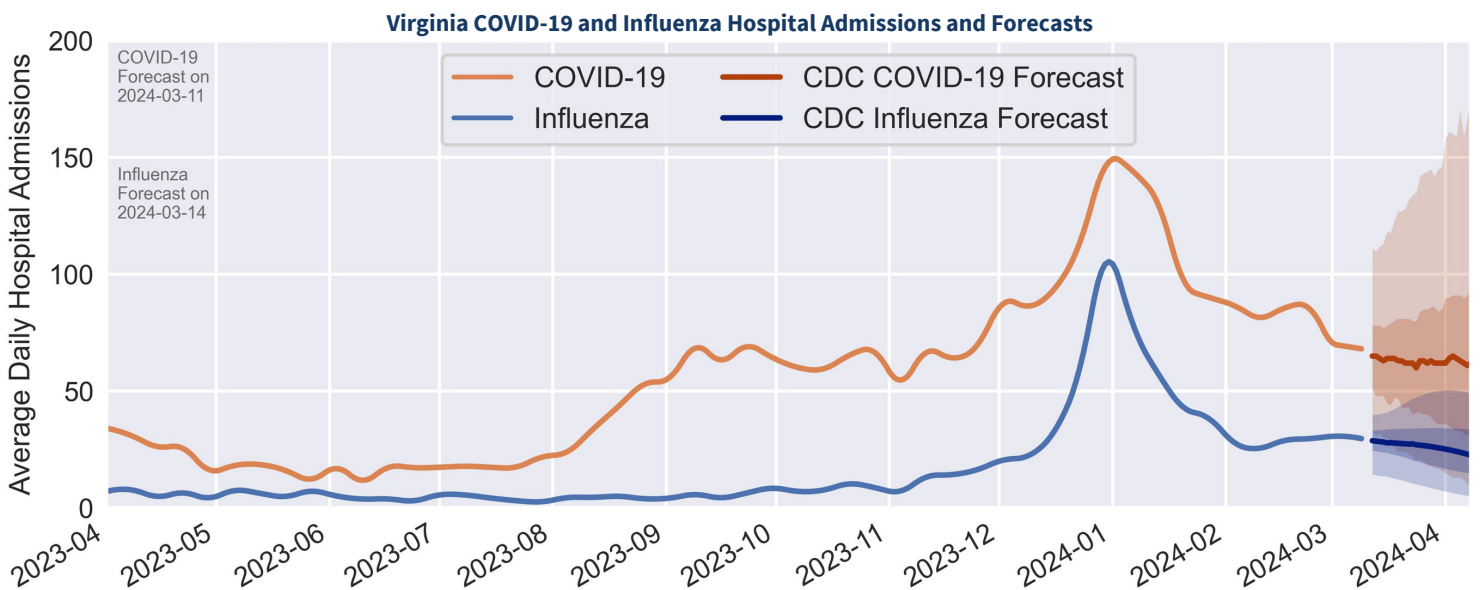
- Influenza activity is stable or decreasing slowly.** Emergency Department (ED) and Urgent Care (UC) diagnoses of flu in Virginia are down 9%. Though the statewide flu intensity level is still 'High', levels decreased in three of the five regions of Virginia. No regions are reporting 'Very High' intensity levels. CDC models suggest that flu activity is 'stable'.
- COVID-19 activity is steadily decreasing.** After stabilizing in mid-February, COVID-19 activity has resumed a 'declining' trajectory. ED diagnoses rates have fallen for two weeks in a row. Wastewater data suggest viral activity is still 'Very High', but report significantly decreased activity in the last two weeks.
- COVID-19 and flu hospital admissions decrease slowly.** Admissions for COVID-19 are at the lowest level seen since mid-November. Flu admissions are down from last week, but higher than they were in mid-February. Models suggest that admissions rates for both viruses will stabilize and remain level through early-April.
- Gastrointestinal disease activity is increasing nationally and locally.** PCR detections of the virus in Census Region 1 (which includes Virginia) continue to grow. Rates are nearing those seen at the peak of the 2023 norovirus season. Wastewater surveillance data suggest that norovirus and rotavirus rates are 'high' nationally as well as in the Commonwealth.



COVID-19 is in decline, while flu has stabilized. Data Source: [CDC](#).



Norovirus detections continue to climb. Data Source: [CDC](#).

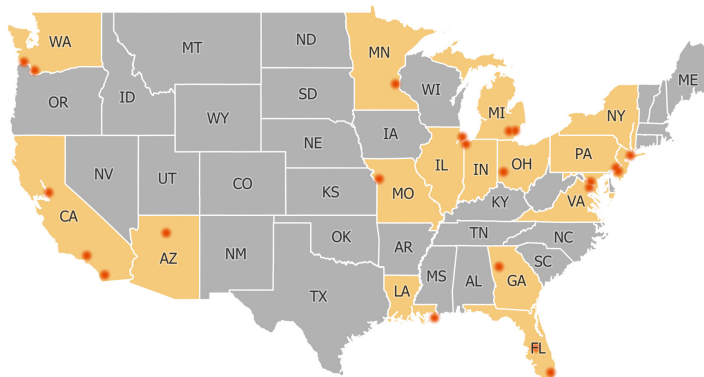


Models suggest a stabilization of hospitalizations for both flu and COVID-19. Note, 50% and 95% forecast confidence intervals are shown as shading. Historical data source: [HealthData.gov](#), COVID-19 forecast data source: [CDC CFA](#), flu forecast data source: [CDC FluSight](#).

Spotlight

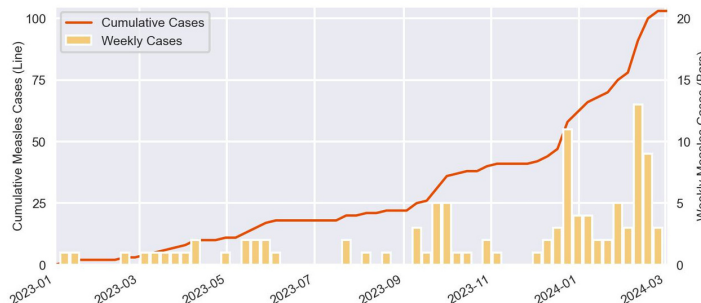
- **Measles continues to “spark” small outbreaks across the nation.** The CDC now reports a total of 45 new cases in 2024, spread across 17 states. This already rivals the 2023 total of 58 national cases. Many of the cases were associated with international travel, and most were among the unvaccinated. The isolated and sporadic nature of these outbreaks suggests that there is no sustained local transmission, as was seen during the 2019 measles outbreak.
- **Chicago reports outbreak at migrant shelter.** Of the city’s 10 confirmed measles cases, eight are at the temporary housing center in Pilsen. The facility currently houses 1,875 people, including nearly 100 children under the age of two. The city had planned to begin evictions of this population starting on Saturday. It is uncertain if this plan will move forward.
- **Global spread of measles continues.** The United Kingdom is dealing with a large spike in cases. The European CDC is also reporting major outbreaks in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Romania. The virus is causing significant outbreaks in the developing world with Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Yemen, India and Iraq reporting more than 10,000 cases each since August.

Measles



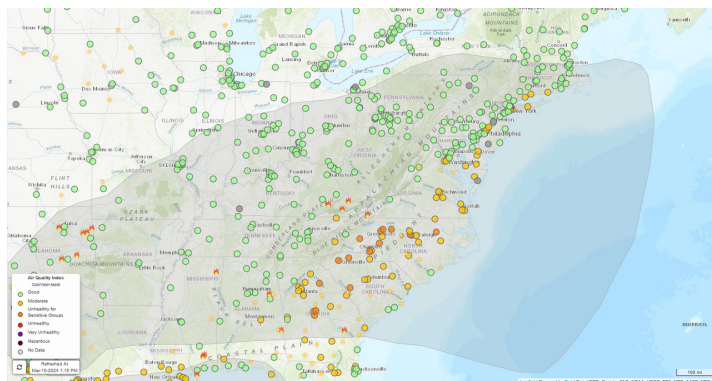
The CDC has reported cases in 17 states since the start of the year. Some of these cases were imported by international travelers and most were among unvaccinated individuals. Data Source: CDC as of 2024-03-07.

U.S. Cases of Measles Since the Start of 2023



Measles cases continue to grow in the United States. Data Source: CDC.

Other News



Smoke from wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma is beginning to impact air quality across the Southeast, including Virginia. Image Source: AirNow.gov as of 2024-03-15 at 1:15 PM

- **The Change Healthcare cyberattack continues to disrupt health system operations across the country.** The Department of Health and Human Services is accelerating payment requests and urging other payers to take action. CMS, in particular, has begun to provide advanced payments to providers. Change Healthcare is expected to resume use of their electronic payment system on March 15.
- **Virginia ranks in the “high-performance” tier for state public health emergency preparedness.** Factors contributing to Virginia’s ranking include an increase in state public health funding and having a high percentage (51%) of hospitals with a top-quality safety ranking.
- **The Virginia Department of Forestry has assigned a “high” fire danger readiness rating to most areas in Virginia.** Fire danger is expected decline with today’s rain but increase again into next week.