



Public Health

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December 31, 2025

ADVISORY

Sharp Increase in Influenza Activity

This advisory is intended for clinicians, laboratorians, infection preventionists, and school nurses. Settings include hospitals, urgent care, pediatrics, clinics, long-term care facilities, schools, and daycare centers in Tarrant County.

Please distribute this advisory to colleagues as appropriate.

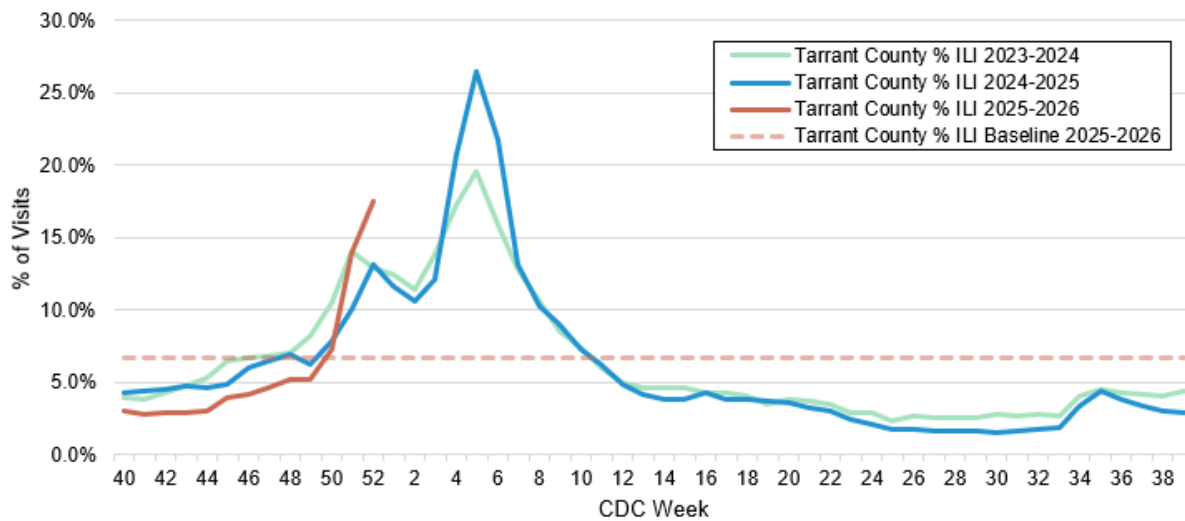
Key Message:

- There has been a sharp increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) across Tarrant County
- Influenza positivity on rapid tests increased by 256% between December 6, 2025, and December 20, 2025
- The percentage of hospital admissions due to influenza has increased from 0.7% in the week ending December 6, 2025, to 5.4% in the week ending December 20, 2025

Situational Summary

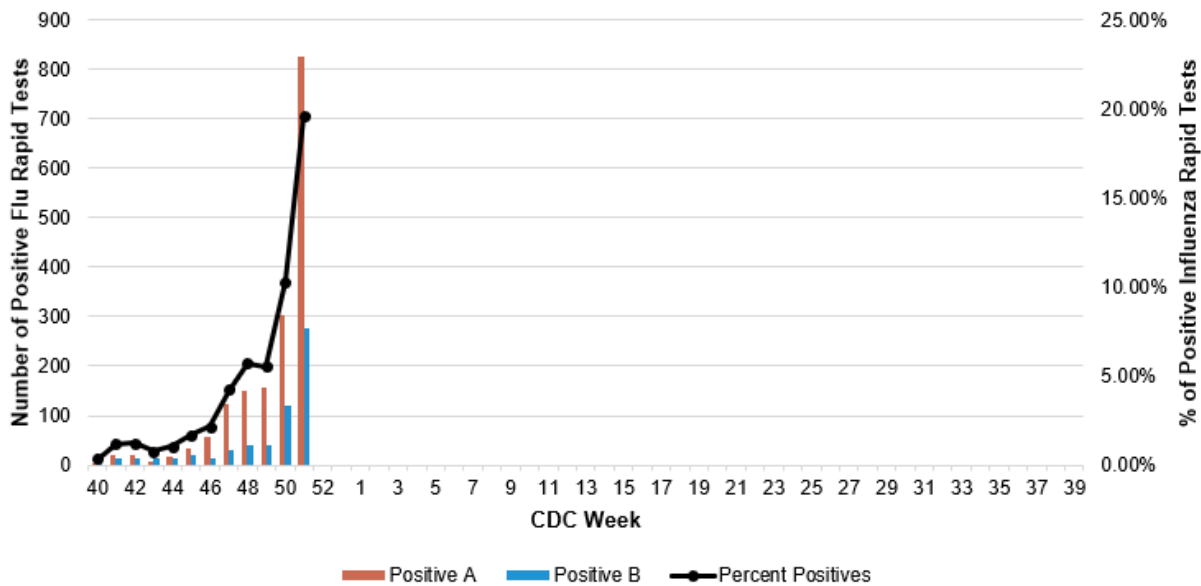
Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) reports a sharp increase in influenza (flu) activity countywide. The Tarrant County percentage of emergency department and urgent care visits due to ILI surpassed the county baseline (6.7%) in Week 50. The baseline percentage demarcates low influenza incidence versus high influenza incidence weeks in Tarrant County. When the ILI percentage is above the baseline, it usually represents the true period of flu season. Tarrant County surpassed the baseline later this season than the two previous seasons; Week 48 in 2024-2025 season and Week 45 in 2023-2024. However, ILI this season in Tarrant County has increased from 7.3% in Week 50 to 14.0% in Week 51 and is higher than the last two seasons during the same time period. ILI percentage has not peaked and continues to climb.

Graph 1. Tarrant County % ILI



Between Week 49 (December 6, 2025) and Week 50 (December 13, 2025), influenza positivity on rapid tests from local hospitals increased from 5.5% to 19.6%, an increase of 256%. So far in the 2025-2026 influenza season, influenza A positivity is 74.0% and influenza B positivity is 26.0%.

Graph 2. Positive Influenza Rapid Tests



Activity this season is being driven by influenza A(H3N2). Since Week 49, the North Texas Regional Laboratory (NTRL) has identified 24 influenza A specimens from surveillance of which 23 of the specimens have been influenza A(H3N2), and 1 specimen has been identified as influenza A(H1N1).

Hospitalizations due to influenza in Tarrant County have also increased significantly in recent weeks. Based on data from the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE), patients hospitalized following ER visits who were diagnosed with influenza increased from 0.7% in Week 49 to 5.4% in Week 52. Please see Table 1 below for data on Tarrant County Influenza Hospitalization by Age Groups.

Table 1: Tarrant County Influenza Hospitalization by Age Groups

| Age Groups | Number of Influenza Hospitalizations | Rate per 100,000 | Median Days Hospitalized |
|------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Age 0-4 | 46 | 32.8 | 2 |
| Age 5-24 | 72 | 11.5 | 2 |
| Age 25-64 | 29 | 2.5 | 3 |
| Age 65+ | 54 | 18.7 | 4 |

Note: Data for Tarrant County Influenza Hospitalization by Age Groups is obtained from ESSENCE from November 30, 2025 through December 27, 2025.

For more information on influenza and respiratory disease activity, please visit the [Tarrant County Public Health Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#).

Recommendation

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends antiviral treatment as early as possible for any patient with confirmed or suspected influenza who is hospitalized, has severe, complicated, progressive illness, or is at higher risk for influenza complications. Antiviral treatment with oral oseltamivir, inhaled zanamivir, intravenous peramivir, or oral baloxavir also can be considered for any previously healthy, symptomatic outpatient not at higher risk for influenza complications, who are diagnosed with or suspected influenza, based on clinical judgment, if treatment can be initiated within two days of illness onset.

- The recommended treatment course of uncomplicated influenza is two doses per day of oral oseltamivir or inhaled zanamivir for five days, or one dose of intravenous peramivir or oral baloxavir for one day





Tarrant County Public Health recommends residents take precautions to protect themselves and their families during this flu season by:

- Getting Vaccinated: The flu shot helps prevent severe illness and reduces hospitalization.
- Practice Good Hygiene: Wash hands regularly, cover coughs, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover Coughs and Sneezes: Use a tissue or your elbow to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

- **Stay Home When Sick:** People with respiratory virus symptoms should stay home and away from others until symptoms improve and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications.
- **Seek Medical Attention:** Medications to treat influenza are available and effective in reducing the severity and length of illness if given early after becoming sick. Contact your health care provider to see if a medication is appropriate for you.

Selected References:

[Influenza Antiviral Medications: Summary for Clinicians](#) | CDC

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|  | Alert: | Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention |
|  | Advisory: | Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action. |
|  | Update: | Provides update information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action. |
|  | Information: | Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature. |

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