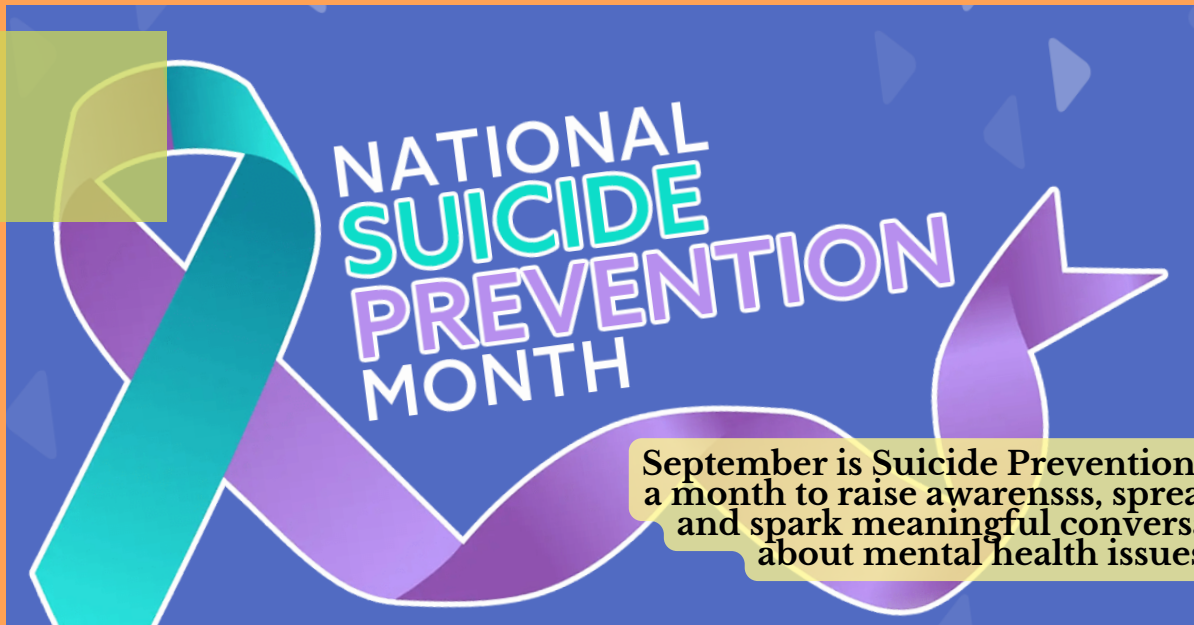


SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

National Suicide Prevention + Awareness Month
Preparing for Fall & Winter Sick Months



It's as simple as asking someone **"How are you REALLY doing?"** **"Are you thinking about suicide?"**

BE THERE. Listen without judgement. Acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce suicidal thoughts.

KEEP THEM SAFE. Asking the person if they have a plan and reducing highly lethal items or places can prevent suicide.

HELP THEM CONNECT. Connect the person with a suicide or crisis lifeline and other community resources can give them a safety net. You can also help them reach out to a trusted family member or mental health professional.

FOLLOW UP. Staying in touch with the person after they have experienced a crisis or been discharged from care can make a difference. Studies show that supportive, ongoing contact can play an important role in suicide prevention.

5	Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide
	1. ASK
	2. BE THERE
	3. HELP KEEP THEM SAFE
	4. HELP THEM CONNECT
	5. FOLLOW UP

5	pasos que usted puede tomar para ayudar a una persona que tiene pensamientos suicidas
	1. PREGUNTE.
	2. ESTÉ PRESENTE.
	3. AYUDE A LA PERSONA A MANTENERSE A SALVO.
	4. AYÚDELA A QUE SE CONECTE.
	5. MANTÉNGASE EN CONTACTO.



SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



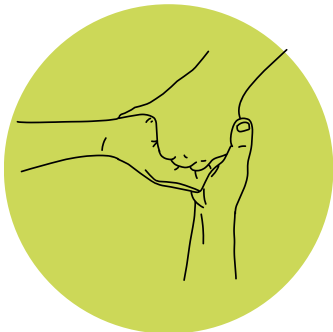
What is suicide?

Suicide is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their lives, and they die as a result. A suicide attempt is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their life, but do not die.



Public Health Concern

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. When a person dies by suicide, the effects are felt by family, friends, and communities.



Who is at risk?

People of all ages, sexes, and ethnicities can be at risk for suicide. Main risk factors are: History of suicide attempts, depression or other mental disorders, or substance use disorders, family history, exposure to abuse, and more.



What are the warning signs?

Talking about wanting to die or kill themselves, talking about feeling empty, hopeless, trapped, or feeling like there are no solutions. Giving away important possessions, withdrawing from family and friends, and more.

RESOURCES

[Frequently Asked Questions About Suicide:](#)

[Suicide & Crisis LIFELINE](#)

[Know the Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Suicide](#)

[Being Prepared for a Crisis](#)

[Navigating a Mental Health Crisis Guide](#)

[What You Need to Know About Youth Suicide](#)

[Suicide Prevention Month](#)

[Take Action](#)

[988 Crisis Response State Legislation Map](#)

[Trevor Project](#)

[Veteran Crisis Line](#)

[National Action Alliance](#)



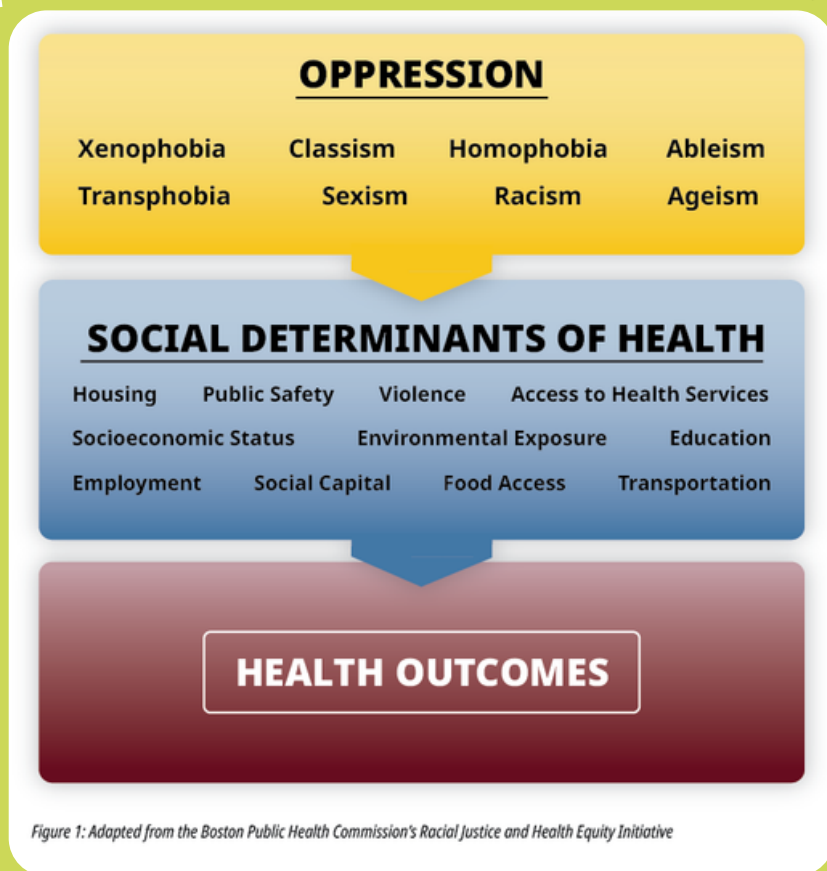
NATIONAL
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION**
MONTH

**SAY SOMETHING.
LISTEN. SUPPORT.**

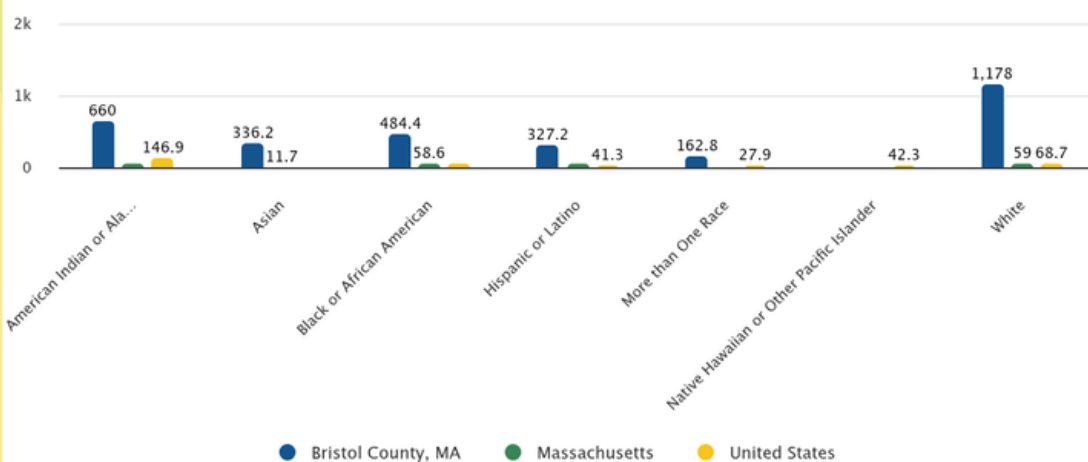
SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

What impacts someones health outcomes?

Health outcomes are directly related to how social determinants of health impacts one's daily lives such as housing, access to health services, and transportation which is linked to different forms of oppression such as systemic racism.



Deaths of Despair, Crude Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.) by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC – National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2020–2024.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/26/2026

How Race and Ethnicity is impacted in Bristol County

In Bristol County, the highest crude rate of deaths of despair over a 5 year period were White individuals at 1,178 with American Indian (AI) or Alaskan Native (AN) coming in second at 660. **This population only makes up 1% of the Bristol County population.**

The rate of deaths of despair for American Indian and Alaskan Natives in Bristol County was 9.1 times higher than the statewide AI/AN rate, which makes them disproportionately affected.



NATIONAL
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
MONTH**



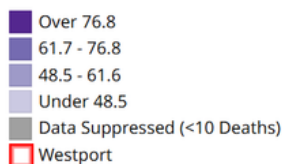
STATE, COUNTY, & TOWN MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DATA



Westport

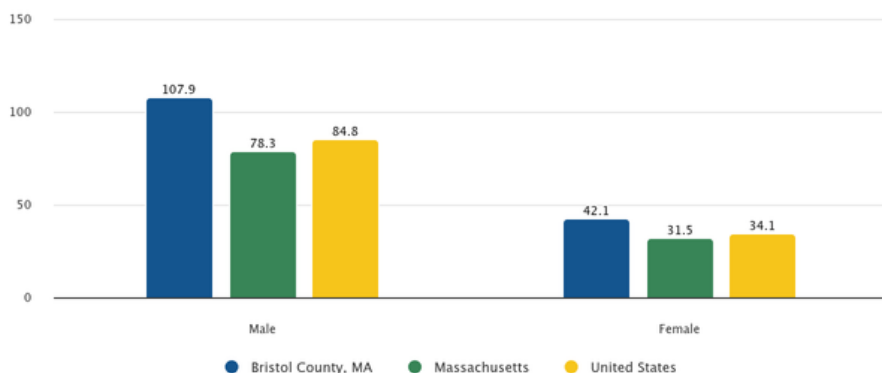
Westport has a higher crude rate of deaths of despair than Massachusetts overall, exceeding the states rate of 54.4 deaths per 100,000 at 74.2 deaths per 100,000 people.

Deaths of Despair, Crude Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.) by County, CDC NVSS 2020-24



Deaths of Despair by Sex

Deaths of Despair, Crude Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.) by Sex



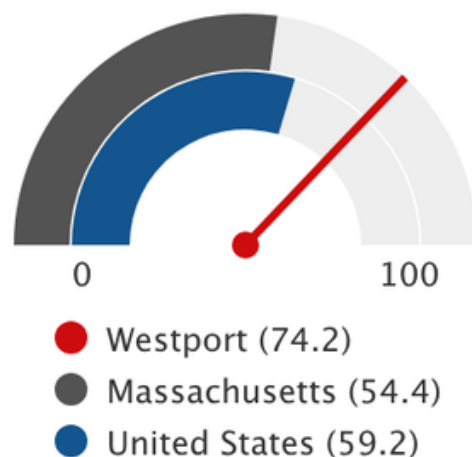
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC – National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2020–2024.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

Males have higher rates of deaths of despair than females across Bristol County, Massachusetts, and the nation as a whole.

5-YEAR TOTAL DEATHS OF DESPAIR (SUICIDE, DRUG POISONING, OR ALCOHOL POISONING)

Report Area	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Westport	74.2
Bristol County, MA	74.2
Massachusetts	54.4
United States	59.2

Deaths of Despair, Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)



Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

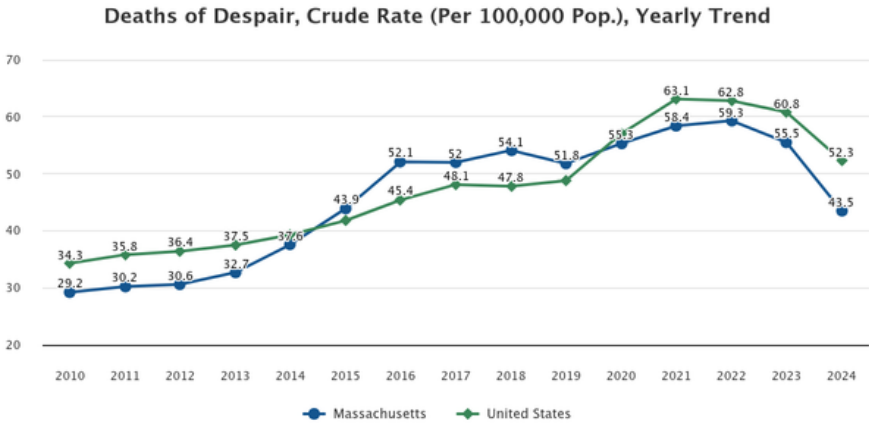
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC – National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2020–2024.

Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

**SAY SOMETHING.
LISTEN. SUPPORT.**

STATE, COUNTY, & TOWN MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DATA

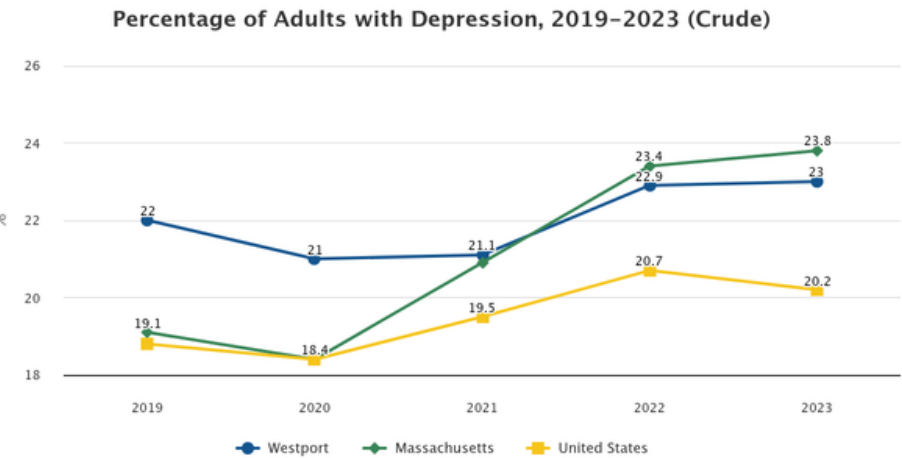
Deaths of Despair Rate by Year 2010-2024



Note: No county data available. See data source and methodology for more details.
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC – National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2020–2024.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

Over the last 6 years, Massachusetts has consistently reported deaths of despair rates below the federal average, with 2024 marking the lowest rate in the state since 2014.

Westport

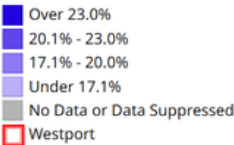


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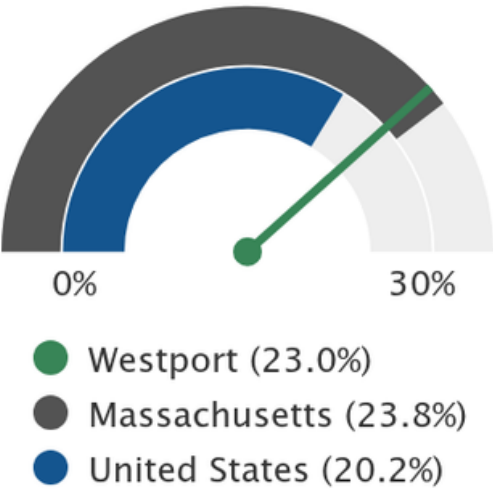
Since 2022–2023, the percentage of adults in Westport has remained consistent.

5-YEAR TOTAL DEATHS OF DESPAIR (SUICIDE, DRUG POISONING, OR ALCOHOL POISONING)

Depression, Prevalence Among Adults Age 18+ by ZCTA, CDC BRFSS PLACES Project 2023



Percentage of Adults Age 18+ with Depression



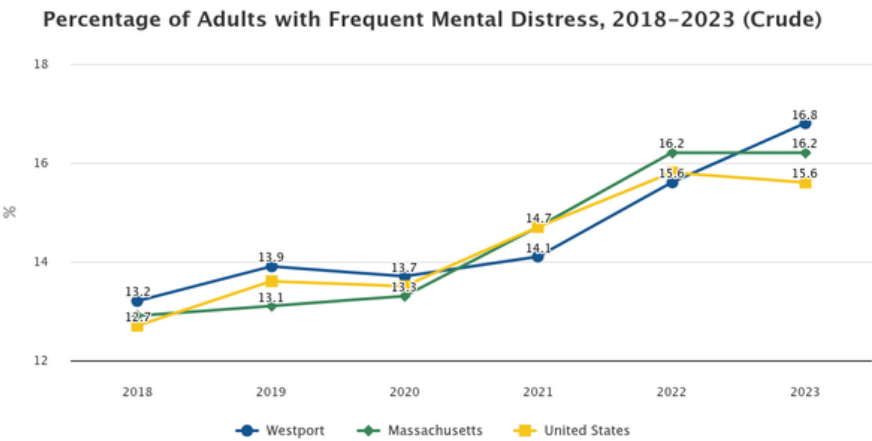
Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the PLACES Data Portal. 2023.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

Westport’s crude percentage of adults aged 18+ with depression is 23%, with Bristol County being at 23.8%, Massachusetts at 23.8%, and nationally at 20.2%.

SAY SOMETHING.
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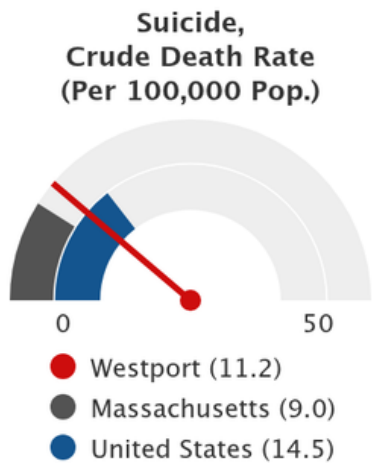
STATE, COUNTY, & TOWN MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DATA

% of Adults with Frequent Mental Distress by Year 2018-2023 Crude



Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

Between 2018 and 2023, the percentage of Westport adults aged 18 and older experiencing frequent mental distress increased steadily.

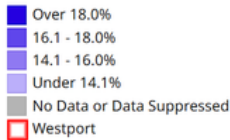


Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC – National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2020-2024.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

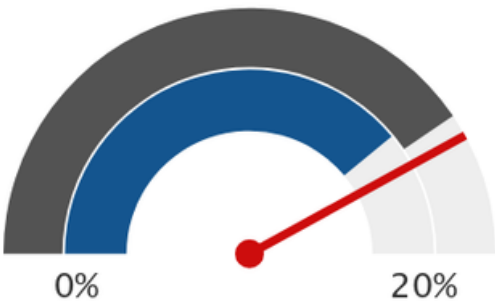
Westport
Westport's crude suicide death rate is 11.2 per 100,000 people, exceeding the Massachusetts state average of 9.0 per 100,000.

5-YEAR TOTAL DEATHS OF DESPAIR (SUICIDE, DRUG POISONING, OR ALCOHOL POISONING)

Frequent Mental Distress, Prevalence Among Adults Age 18+ by ZCTA, CDC BRFSS PLACES Project 2023



Percentage of Adults Age 18+ with Poor Mental Health



- Westport (16.8%)
- Massachusetts (16.2%)
- United States (15.6%)

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the PLACES Data Portal. 2023.
Downloaded from healthdatatool.mass.gov, 8/24/2026.

Westport's percentage of adults aged 18 and older reporting poor mental health is 16.8%, slightly higher than the Massachusetts rate of 16.2% and the national rate of 15.6%, but lower than Bristol County's rate of 18.6%.

**SAY SOMETHING.
LISTEN. SUPPORT.**

PREPARING FOR FALL & WINTER MONTHS (THE GERMS ARE HERE!)

The First Day of Fall is September 22nd!

The CDC is expecting that the upcoming fall and winter respiratory disease season will likely have a similar peak of hospitalizations due to COVID-19, Influenza, and RSV compared to last season.

Upcoming 2025-26 combined respiratory disease peak hospitalization rates will likely be similar to last year

Combined peak hospitalization rates of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV

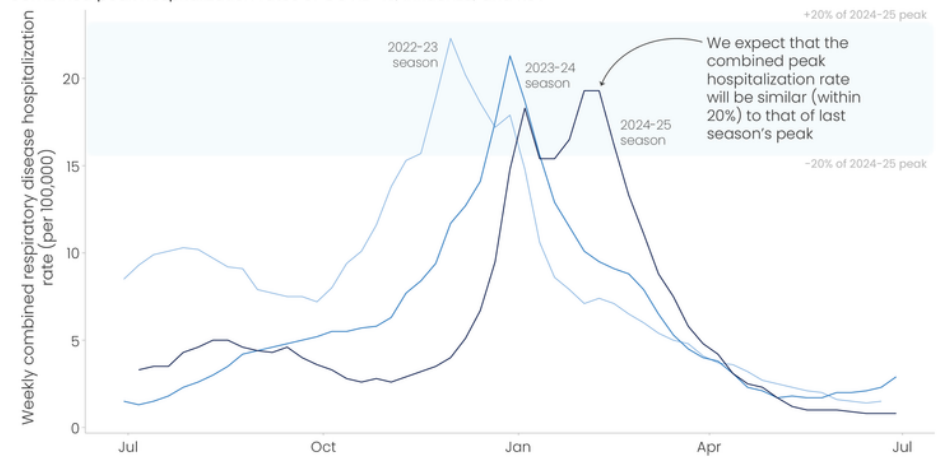


Figure 1. Data for 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 respiratory seasons are from RESP-NET. Experts believe it is most likely that the combined peak hospitalization rate for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV during the 2025-2026 season will be similar to that of last season (within 20% of the 2024-2025 peak), represented by the blue band on the plot.

The CDC says that although peak hospitalization rates are expected to be similar to last year, a higher peak rate is still possible. This is why it is so important to get your seasonal vaccines!

And if you're sick – stay home and rest!



CDC (2026, August 25). 2025-2026 Respiratory Disease Season Outlook. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved August 25, 2026, from <https://www.cdc.gov/cfa-qualitative-assessments/php/data-research/season-outlook25-26.html>

WHAT TO EXPECT THIS UPCOMING SEASON



As of August 19th, the CDC states that the COVID-19 summer disease activity has already increased in much of the United States.

- The health department recommends you stay ahead and get the new COVID-19 vaccine strain once available! You can check online at your local pharmacy or doctor to make an appointment (many also offer walk-in appointments!).

The 2024-2025 Influenza season was classified as a high-severity season and the primary driver of the combined disease burden last season.

- The health department recommends you stay ahead and get the new strain Flu vaccine! ALWAYS REMEMBER Prevention! Prevention! Prevention!

The CDC expects the severity of the 2025-2026 influenza season to be moderate across all ages based on historical trends – though there is still a possibility of a more severe season.

The CDC states vaccination will play a key role in reducing influenza hospitalization burden this season.

