

THE GERM GAZETTE

Quarterly disease trend update for school & daycare health staff



Quarter 1

Jan-March 2026



In The Air: Respiratory Illness



What to do about it?

- Actively monitor for signs & symptoms of respiratory illness, and send ill children home
- Encourage frequent hand washing with soap & warm water (for at least 20 seconds)
- Teach proper cough & sneeze etiquette (i.e., use & dispose of tissue, or elbow/clothing if necessary)
- Enhance cleaning & disinfecting practices ([CDC guidance for early care and education settings](#))
- Notify the Kendall County Health Department of cases of reportable disease



SURVEILLANCE SPOTLIGHT:

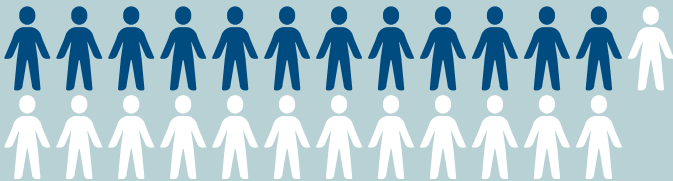
2024-2025 Respiratory Season

During the 2024-2025 respiratory season in Kendall County, there were 29 cases of respiratory disease reported among pre-school and school-aged individuals (3-18 years old). Reported diseases included haemophilus influenzae (invasive disease), pertussis, streptococcus pneumoniae (invasive disease), and ICU admissions of COVID-19, influenza and RSV.

52%

of cases were hospitalized;
of these, 87% were admitted
to the intensive care unit
(ICU) with COVID-19,
influenza, or RSV

48%



of cases were diagnosed
with pertussis, also known
as whooping cough



Data is as of 1/2/2026, is subject to change, and is sourced from Illinois' National Electronic Disease Surveillance System

What Are We Seeing Across Illinois?



From 12/21-12/27, respiratory illness activity in Illinois was high, during this time:

- Labs identified influenza as the most common viral infection
- Approximately half of all emergency department visits among children under 5 years old were due to broad acute respiratory illness (ARI; includes COVID-19, flu, RSV, & others)
- Children aged 5-17 years had the highest proportion of hospitalizations due to broad ARI among all groups*

*Differences across age groups may reflect variation in healthcare-seeking behavior and clinical severity, in addition to disease activity

[IDPH Seasonal Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#)

2025-26
VACCINE
COVERAGE



among Kendall County
residents aged 6
months to 17 years

INFLUENZA

17.1%

COVID-19

1.1%

Data is through November 2025, is subject to change, and is sourced from the Illinois Vaccination Coverage Dashboards

MYTH OR FACT:

All respiratory illnesses can be treated with antibiotics

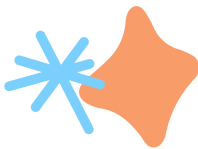
Answer: Myth! Many respiratory illnesses are caused by viruses. Antibiotics are not effective treatment for viral infections and can lead to antibiotic resistance.

FOR QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR TO
NOTIFY KCHD OF REPORTABLE
DISEASE:

CALL 630-553-9100 EXT. 8046



RESOURCE
CORNER



Respiratory Illnesses
Going Around
(other than COVID-
19, flu, & RSV)



Illinois Department
of Public Health
Reportable Disease
Poster



Communicable
Disease School
Nurse Guidance