

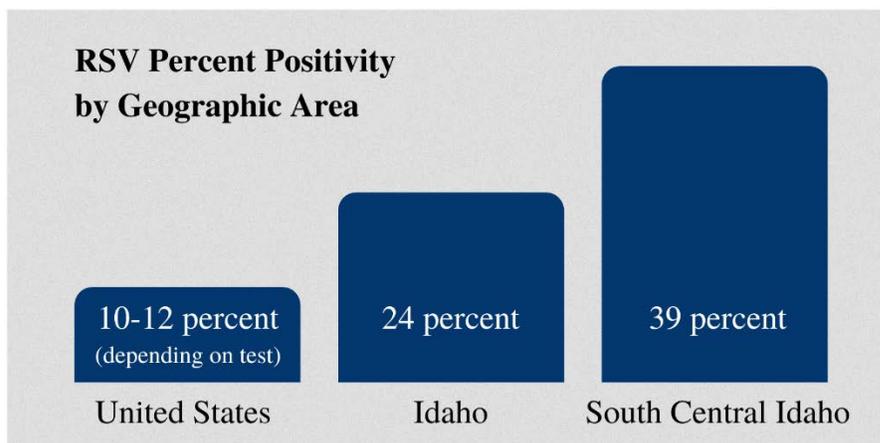
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Respiratory season is ramping up early, take steps to protect your health now**

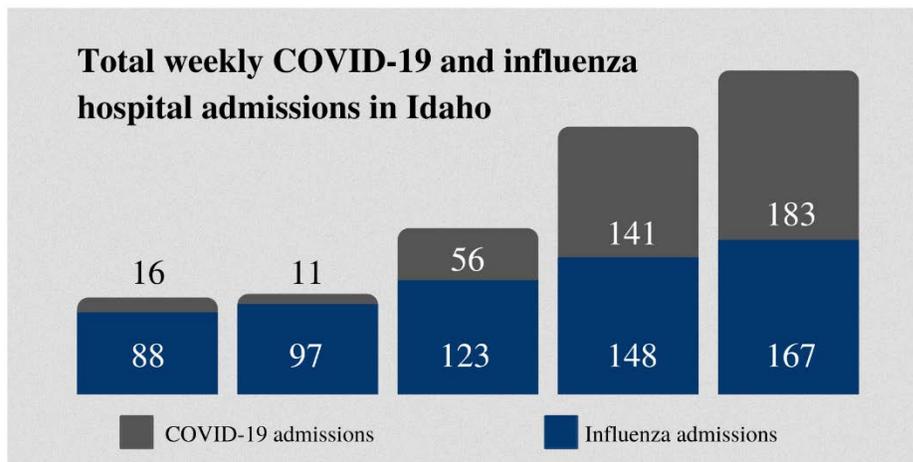
**South Central Idaho** – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) urges residents to protect their health as case data show winter respiratory diseases are hitting the region earlier than usual.



\*Data from IDHW

Data on the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's (IDHW) [website](#) show about 24 percent of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) lab tests came back positive between November 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. In south central Idaho, that positivity rate jumped to nearly 40 percent.

Other viruses are also spreading in the region. Influenza has been detected in most areas of Idaho, including the south central region, and IDHW reports hospital admissions for confirmed influenza increased by over 1,500 percent in the last four weeks. COVID-19 cases have also increased over the last five weeks. The number of cases reported in the region jumped 62 percent last week compared to the week before. Statewide, IDHW reports hospital admissions for COVID have increased 72 percent in the last week.



\*Data from IDHW

“This fall has been cold and snowy, it is natural for people to gather indoors. The close proximity and decreased air flow give respiratory viruses the perfect opportunity to spread,” says Logan Hudson, SCPHD Division Administrator. “We’ll continue gathering inside most of the season, so it is important we take steps now to protect our health and decrease our risk of getting sick.”

Many respiratory viruses are contagious before symptoms start so practicing good hygiene at all times can help prevent disease spread. SCPHD recommends people:

- Stay home when sick.
- Get a vaccination/booster for any viruses circulating. In our region this includes flu and COVID-19.
- Wash hands often, especially after sneezing, coughing, using a bathroom, or blowing your nose. It is always important to wash your hands before touching your face.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth whenever possible.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes or cough into your sleeve.

Vaccination is particularly important for people at high risk for serious flu complications. This includes older adults, children under the age of two, people with chronic health conditions like diabetes, cancer, or heart conditions, and pregnant women.

### Resources:

Visit [phd5.idaho.gov](https://phd5.idaho.gov) for clinic schedules and contact information.

Idaho RSV data: <https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/resp-synct>

Idaho Flu data: <https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/infectious-disease-idaho>

South central Idaho COVID-19 data:

[https://public.tableau.com/views/DataDashboard2\\_0\\_16487617507500/Story1?:language=en-US&:embed=y&:embed\\_code\\_version=3&:loadOrderID=0&:display\\_count=y&publish=yes&:origin=viz\\_share\\_link](https://public.tableau.com/views/DataDashboard2_0_16487617507500/Story1?:language=en-US&:embed=y&:embed_code_version=3&:loadOrderID=0&:display_count=y&publish=yes&:origin=viz_share_link)