

COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

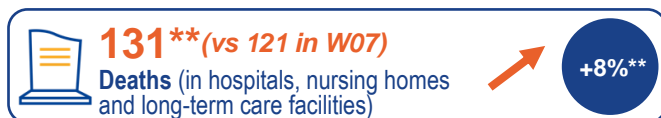
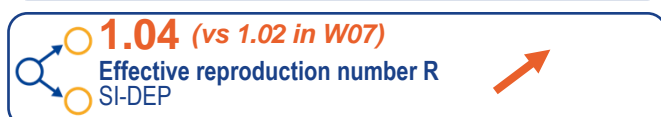
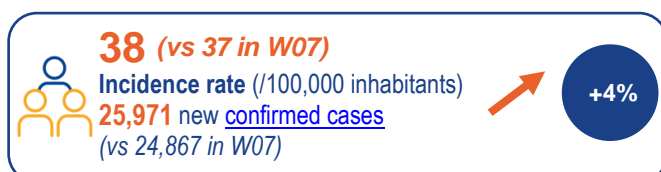
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As part of its surveillance, alert, and prevention missions, Santé publique France analyses and publishes COVID-19 data obtained from its network of partners¹ as well as its own studies and surveys. This report is based on data submitted to Santé publique France up to 1 March 2023.

Key numbers

In week 8 (20-26 February 2023)

Compared to week 7 (13-19 February 2023)



On 27 February 2023

Compared to 20 February 2023



Key points

Epidemiological situation

In week 8, virological indicators increased slightly again, but remained at low levels. Indicators for emergency department visits were stable. Hospital admissions continued to decrease.

- Metropolitan France:
 - Incidence rate stable or slightly up in most age groups
 - Slight increase in positivity rate
 - Incidence and positivity rates stable or slightly up in most regions
 - Hospital admission rate down in majority of regions
- Overseas France:
 - Incidence and positivity rates down slightly in Reunion Island
 - Hospital admission rate decreasing or stable at a very low level

Variants

- BA.5 remained in majority but decreased further (55% of sequences in week 6 Flash Survey), as did its sub-lineage BQ.1.1 (43% in week 6 Flash Survey vs 49% in week 5)
- Increase in recombinant XBB to 34% (vs 26% in week 5 Flash Survey), with 26% of XBB.1.5 (vs 20%)

Prevention

- Vaccination on 27 February 2023 (Vaccin Covid data):
 - 22.8% of 60-79 year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant (26.8% among those eligible); in the 80+ age group, 25.5% had received this booster dose (29.1% among those eligible)
 - 26.8% of 60-79 year-olds and 16.1% of 80+ year-olds had received a dose of vaccine in the last 6 or 3 months, respectively
- Given that SARS-CoV-2 and winter viruses are still in active circulation, continued compliance with preventive measures remains recommended:
 - up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination, including a booster dose of bivalent vaccine (protecting against the original strain and the Omicron variant) for eligible individuals already vaccinated with a primary series, and flu vaccination;
 - continued application of precautionary measures, particularly in case of a positive test and/or symptoms.

*This increase should be interpreted with caution as the activities of SOS Médecins were disrupted in week 7 due to strike actions on 14 February.

**W08: unconsolidated data. Updated values for these indicators will feature in the next Epidemiological Update.

¹Santé publique France acknowledges the large public health network that contributes to COVID-19 surveillance: healthcare professionals working in private practice and hospitals, emergency departments, hospital and private biology laboratories, learned societies for infectious diseases, resuscitation and emergency medicine, CNAM, INSERM and INSEE.

Week 8 (20 to 26 February 2023)

SITUATION UPDATE

In week 8, virological indicators remained at low levels with a slight increase in incidence and positivity rates, which occurred in the context of a decreased screening rate*. The number of emergency department visits stabilised while new hospital admissions continued to fall. On 27 February, only 22.8% of 60-79 year-olds and 25.5% of 80+ year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant. Given that several respiratory viruses are still in active circulation, reinforcing vaccination coverage for COVID-19 and the flu among eligible persons remains necessary. Compliance with protective precautions and other preventive measures remains recommended in case of symptoms or a positive test, as well as to protect vulnerable people.

A slight increase in incidence and positivity rates was again observed at national level. The incidence rate continued to decrease among 10-19 year-olds, but remained stable or increased slightly in the other age groups. The positivity rate increased slightly and the screening rate continued to decline in all age groups. Consultations for suspected COVID-19 stabilised in emergency departments. In metropolitan France, incidence and positivity rates were stable or rising in most regions. Meanwhile, hospital admissions continued to decline in the majority of regions. In overseas France, incidence and positivity rates were slightly up in Martinique and Guadeloupe, but remained at moderate levels. In Reunion Island, these same rates were decreasing while hospital admissions were slightly increasing.

Since the emergence of Omicron in late 2021, significant and rapid genetic diversification has been observed within this variant and its successive sub-lineages. However, all Omicron sub-lineages currently described feature very similar characteristics, hence remaining within this variant. In metropolitan France, BA.5 (all sub-lineages combined) was still in majority but continued to decrease with 55% of interpretable sequences in the week 6 Flash Survey on 6 February 2023 (vs 63% in the week 5 Flash Survey). Among the sub-lineages of BA.5, detection of BQ.1.1 (including all further sub-lineages) fell to 43% of interpretable sequences in the week 6 Flash Survey (vs 49% in the week 5 Flash Survey). In parallel, there was a stabilisation of BA.2 sub-lineages (9% in the Flash Survey for week 5 and 10% for week 6) and an increase of the recombinant XBB (from 26% in the week 5 Flash Survey to 34% in week 6). Among the sub-lineages of the recombinant XBB, XBB.1.5 increased the most rapidly, from 20% in the Flash Survey for week 5 to 26% in week 6. More information is available in the [risk assessment of 15/02/2023 on emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants](#) (French only).

Vaccination coverage for the booster dose continued to rise slowly. On 27 February 2023, 22.8% of 60-79 year-olds and 25.5% of 80+ year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant (26.8% and 29.1% among those eligible, respectively**). At that date, 26.8% of 60-79 year-olds had received a vaccine dose within the last 6 months**, and 16.1% of 80+ year-olds within the last 3 months***. Vaccination coverage among health professionals for the primary vaccination series, the first booster dose and the booster adapted to the Omicron variant is estimated respectively at 95.7%, 86.3% and 13.3% for those working in nursing homes; 97.7%, 88.9% and 14.3% for those working in private practice; 96.6%, 88.4% and 14.8% for those working in health institutions****.

*Due to possible changes in the use of screening, particularly owing to the change in derogatory sick-leave compensation from 1 February 2023, these indicators may be underestimated and should be interpreted with caution.

Method described in Epidemiological Update N° 145. *All COVID-19 vaccines included. ****Method described in Epidemiological Update N° 147.

Graphs and tables

[InfoCovidFrance](#)

The dashboard gives direct access to the indicators presented as graphs and tables and a complementary weekly report covering:

- [hospital indicators](#)
- [long-term care facility indicators](#)
- [virological data at national level](#)
- [virological data at regional level](#)
- [data on variants](#)
- [data on vaccination coverage](#)

For more information on COVID-19, the surveillance systems in place, and vaccination, consult the websites of [Santé publique France](#) and [Vaccination Info Service](#)
For more information on the regional data, see the [Regional Epidemiological Updates](#)
Find all the open access data on [Géodes](#)