

Non-COVID-19 Respiratory Outbreak Reporting

Introduction for K-12 reporters

Winter 2024 Version 2

Making reporting quicker and accessible.



Replacing .pdf influenza-like illness reporting form.



Provides options for reporting outbreaks of illness that are not in the reportable disease rule, like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).



Clarifying which information is required for the point-in-time report versus information that can be provided when available.



Sends immediate acknowledgement of submission and sharing of applicable resources to your facility.



Uses the same reporting platform and database as COVID-19 outbreak reporting for consistency and collaboration.

What hasn't changed:



The information requested is the same.



This tool is intended to be used by all institutions required to report as well as institutional settings opting to report.



Find it on the healthvermont.gov webpage.



Information will be sent to Vermont Department of Health Division of Laboratory Sciences and Infectious Disease.



Your feedback helps improve the data collection tool.

Influenza or Influenza-like Illness Outbreak Definition:

What is an Outbreak?

Increased absenteeism* throughout the school in association with influenza-like illness. This includes:

- Students who are sent home with fever and cough or sore throat.
- Absent students with parental reports of flu.
- Absent students with parental reports of fever and cough or sore throat.

*Increased absenteeism is defined as absentee rates exceeds **10%** for **entire school** OR absentee rate exceeds **20%** of one **grade or class**

Please provide answers below to the best of your knowledge at the time of report:

Denominator	Total number of students/children in the affected classroom/school	<input type="text"/>
Numerator	All students/children with illness, with or without a positive test	<input type="text"/>

Example: A school has influenza-like illness affecting its 3rd grade classroom with 10 students enrolled in the class. **Three (3)** of those students are ill. The **total # is 10**, the number of students in the classroom. $3 \div 10 = 30\%$. This information is needed to determine if a situation meets the outbreak definition of increased absenteeism associated with influenza-like illness.

Outbreak Decision Scenario



An elementary school nurse is observing the first increase of absenteeism and visits to the school nurse since school started this year.



The third grade is most affected; of the 80 third graders, 8 are out sick with fever, cough, and sore throat.



Of the 480 students at the school, 25 students are absent due to respiratory illness.

Is this scenario an outbreak of influenza-like illness?

Is this a new event?

Influenza outbreaks are considered over after two incubation periods pass without further illness since the last symptom onset. This is ordinarily eight days.

Does this meet affected group criteria?

Affected group criterion: Students

Does the affected group meet clinical criteria?

Clinical criteria:

- Students who are sent home with fever and cough or sore throat
- Absent students with parental reports of flu
- Absent students with parental reports of fever and cough or sore throat

Has the absenteeism threshold been met?

Increased absenteeism is defined as:

- absentee rates exceeds 10% for entire school; OR
- absentee rate exceeds 20% of one grade or class.

By answering these questions, have you determined this facility currently experiencing an ILI outbreak?

No.

Why not?

It is not experiencing an outbreak. The school does not have the absenteeism threshold met for the school ($25/480 = 5.2\%$) or for the grade ($8/80 = 10\%$).

Outbreak form example run-through

After adjusting the absenteeism percentages, the criteria for an ILI outbreak in this scenario is met.

Other criteria still applying, the updated absenteeism counts for this example are both meeting outbreak criteria.



The third grade is most affected; of the 80 third graders, **16** are out sick with fever, cough, and sore throat.



Of the 480 students at the school, **51** students are absent due to respiratory illness.

Test link to follow along: <https://apps-test.health.vermont.gov/SMARTPublic/Condition/Create>

Vermont Department of Health Outbreak Report Form - SMART Program



Thank you for reporting a potential infectious disease outbreak at your facility to the Vermont Department of Health. This data will help us track outbreaks and support your facility. Please select the condition you are reporting from the dropdown, below.

If you do not see the condition you are trying to report, please call 802-863-7240.

-- Please Select --

-- Please Select --

Influenza/Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

Other non-COVID-19 viral respiratory outbreak

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

COVID-19

This scenario is for an ILI outbreak and should be the option selected from the webpage's drop-down menu.

What is the facility type? *

-- Please Select --

-- Please Select --

Long term care facility

School/Childcare

Shelter

Corrections

Other Healthcare Setting

This scenario is for a school facility type. The question is required (*) because following prompts depend on its answer.

School / Childcare type:

K-12 School

-- Please Select --

K-12 School

College / University

Boarding K-12 school

After School Care

Childcare

Overnight Camp

Other

Available options for School Type. These align with current COVID-19 outbreak reporting.

This scenario is for an elementary school, which is in the “K-12 School” category.

What is the facility type? *

School / Childcare type:

As much information as is available should be provided.

Facility Name: *

At minimum, the required (*) fields are necessary to report the outbreak and allow for follow up from the influenza coordinator, if requested.

Facility Physical Address *

City *

State *

Zip *

Reporting Person

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Reporter Title:

Phone number:

Email: *

Condition: Influenza/Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

Outbreak Information

What was the date of symptom onset or positive test for the first case detected during this outbreak? Click to select a date MM-DD-YYYY:

mm/dd/yyyy



What symptoms have been identified in ill cases? Select all that apply. *

- Fever >100F
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Muscle aches
- Other symptoms

As much information as is available should be provided. If the date of the first ill student's symptom onset is not available, it can be provided later.

At minimum, the required (*) fields are necessary to confirm the outbreak criteria.

Influenza test result fields:

Were positive influenza test results reported?

Influenza type:

Other, specify:

Where were specimens tested?

This scenario had positive flu results reported. Any known details can be provided here.

These optional prompts will open even if the reported outbreak is not for influenza.

It's helpful to know if there were any flu positives even if it is another respiratory illness **outbreak** being reported, but it is not required information in that scenario.

How widespread is the illness activity at the time of this report?

Entire Facility

Comments:

Outbreak criteria were met both in whole school and third grade (18/80) at Acme Elementary for this reporting period.

This scenario meets criteria for a grade level and a school level outbreak. The larger outbreak scale should be reported since it includes the counts of the grade-level outbreak.

Please provide answers below to the best of your knowledge at the time of report:

Total number of students/children in the affected classroom/school:

All students/children with illness, with or without a positive test:

If known, number of students/children with positive tests for reported outbreak virus:


Context for types of illness circulating

Number of students/children hospitalized:

Hospital(s)

Number of student/child deaths:

Date(s) and location(s) of deaths

Individual pediatric mortality cases associated with flu must be reported to the Health Department. 

Number of students/children visiting ER:

Hospital(s)

Context for severity of illness

Optional: please provide answers below to the best of your knowledge at the time of report:

Total number of staff in the affected facility

All staff with illness, with or without a positive test

If known, number of staff with positive tests for reported outbreak virus

Number of staff hospitalized

Hospital(s)

Number of staff deaths

Date(s) and location(s) of deaths

Number of staff visiting ER

Hospital(s)

Staff illness does not contribute to the definition of an influenza or influenza-like illness outbreak.

Reporting staff illness is optional for the reportable flu/ILI outbreak scenario.

This scenario had no other illnesses reported at an outbreak level of activity at the time of the report.

Are there any other active outbreaks in the facility already reported to the Vermont Department of Health? (Example: COVID-19)

-- Please Select -- ▾

Please check this box if you request follow-up by phone or email within a business day.


I request follow-up to this submission within a business day.

Do you have any additional notes or comments?

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

End of form.
Finish the process by pressing “Submit”.



Successful submission page:

Condition: Influenza/Influenza-like Illness (ILI)


Thank You!

Thank you for submitting the viral respiratory illness outbreak report form. For influenza or ILI outbreaks, please refer to www.healthvermont.gov/fluoutbreak

Please also review these steps to prevent and reduce viral respiratory illness:

- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, if those are unavailable, use an alcohol-based sanitizer
- Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces. Common household cleaners kill the flu virus
- Refer to the CDC document [Cleaning to Prevent the Flu](#)
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- As much as possible, keep ill and well individuals separated
- Encourage influenza vaccination. As long as flu is still circulating it is not too late to get vaccinated

If you have an additional respiratory illness to report, please return to the survey home page.



This form will not generate an automatic email reply as was done with the previous online form. That update is planned to be complete for the 2024-25 respiratory illness season.

What situations would require additional flu/ILI reporting to the Health Department?

Your facility does not need to provide number/percent absent updates during the same outbreak period.

Additional reporting required if:

- An unusual or atypical situation arises (e.g., severe morbidity, multiple hospitalizations) during a reported outbreak.
- The school/classrooms return to their baseline absences for at least eight calendar days then experience ILI absences meeting the outbreak threshold again.

IMMEDIATE reporting required if a person under age 18 has died and the death is attributable to illness with influenza or influenza-like illness.

Additional resources

healthvermont.gov/fluoutbreak

Your Office of Local Health

hilary.fannin@vermont.gov | yvonne.boire@vermont.gov

Updated FAQ document developed for 2022-23 season
(follows)

School Nurse Liaison Influenza-like Illness FAQ – Updated January 2024

What needs to be [reported](#) by school nurses or school administrators?

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreak:
 - ILI is defined as symptoms of fever (100F or higher) **plus** cough or sore throat. This definition captures absenteeism or nurse's office visits due to any respiratory pathogen that present with symptoms of ILI, not just influenza. Increased absenteeism is defined as:
 - 10% of the school population or
 - 20% of a grade or classroom.
 - Influenza does not need to be confirmed when reporting an ILI outbreak.
- Confirmed influenza outbreak:
 - symptoms of fever (100F or higher) **plus** cough or sore throat are being reported for absences of:
 - 10% of the school population or
 - 20% of a grade or classroom.
 - **Plus** counts of positive influenza tests included on the Influenza-like Illness report form.

I haven't calculated percentages of absenteeism, but I'm certain respiratory illnesses are affecting the school above expected activity and I have concerns for public health. What should I do?

- You can reach out to your [Office of Local Health](#) or the influenza coordinator to discuss what is circulating and your public health concerns for guidance and [resources](#). Depending on the situation, they may fill out an ILI outbreak form with you, request one be submitted, or another course of action based on your school's situation.
The Vermont Reportable and Communicable Disease Rule states any unexpected pattern of cases, suspected cases, deaths or increased incidence of any other illness of major public health concern should be [reported](#).

I have a parent reporting a positive influenza A test. Does that need to be reported to the Health Department?

- No. [Novel influenza A](#) and [pediatric death associated with influenza](#) are the only instances when individual cases of influenza are reportable to the Vermont Department of Health and are not likely to be originating from the school environment.

Do I need to submit a line list with the ILI Outbreak Form?

- No. There is a template available for use if helpful for your internal purposes. The Vermont Department of Health does not routinely require line lists to be provided during ILI or flu outbreaks at school settings.

School Nurse Liaison Influenza-like Illness FAQ – Updated January 2024

What happens once my school submits an outbreak form?

- Forms will be reviewed and an email to the submitter with guidance on flu outbreaks will be provided and a call will be placed to your school if requested on the form. Information is added to aggregate outbreak reporting in the weekly surveillance report during the respiratory illness season. Total outbreaks by counties and facility types (e.g. school, long term care facility) are reported weekly. If a school requires additional consultation or has updates to the form, you may email your [Office of Local Health](#) and/or the flu coordinator.

I have a whole school outbreak. On the ILI Outbreak form, should I separate out illness by classrooms?

- You may report the aggregate numbers of ill and affected groups rather than reporting by classroom or grade. Tracking the illnesses on a line list may be helpful for your facility to determine prevention and mitigation activities but that level of information is not typically required to submit as part of an ILI or influenza outbreak report.

On the ILI Outbreak form, what do I enter in “when did illness start”?

- The “when did illness start?” date should correspond with the earliest report of illness related to the outbreak. As an example, School A met the threshold for an ILI outbreak on 10/12/23. The earliest reported illness was a student whose parent reported their symptoms of fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit plus cough on the morning of 10/10/23. The “when did illness start” date would be 10/10/23.
- In the school setting, this information can be reported in at a later time if it is not known at time of the initial report.

I know there are other diagnosed respiratory illnesses at the school but only the outbreak threshold has been reached for ILI and/or flu. How do I report this information?

- Complete the ILI Outbreak form and make a notation of any other respiratory illnesses reported but not meeting outbreak level of activity in the “Additional notes or comments” section of the form. Some respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19 and pertussis, require [individual case reporting](#).
 - Example: “Cases of RSV and COVID-19 reported but do not meet outbreak thresholds for these illnesses at time of report.” In this example, check COVID-19 reporting requirements to ensure those are complete. The RSV cases are sufficiently addressed with this note unless outbreak levels are reached.