

# COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

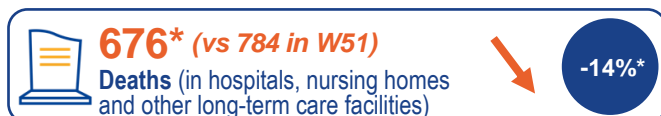
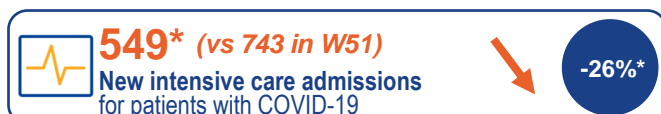
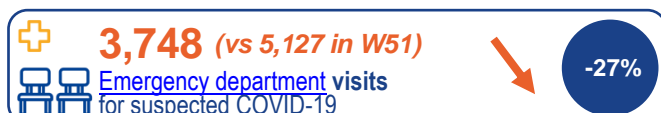
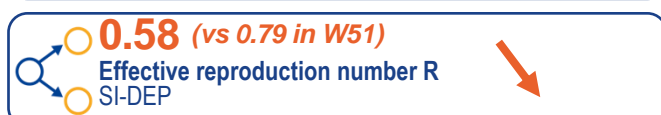
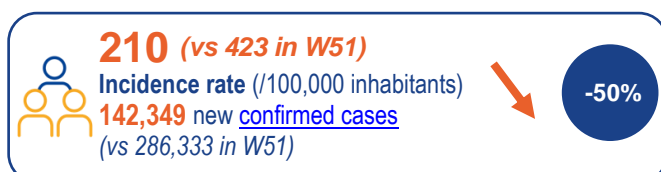
5 January 2023 / N° 148

As part of its surveillance, alert, and prevention missions, Santé publique France analyses and publishes COVID-19 data obtained from its network of partners<sup>1</sup> as well as its own studies and surveys. This report is based on data submitted to Santé publique France up to 4 January 2023.

## Key numbers

In week 52 (26 Dec. 2022-1 Jan. 2023)

Compared to week 51 (19-25 December 2022)



On 2 January 2023

Compared to 26 December 2022



## Key points

### Epidemiological situation

In week 52, circulation of SARS-CoV-2 declined further in France. The incidence rate fell sharply across all age groups in a context of significantly lower screening rates, particularly among people under the age of 60. The number of new hospital admissions remained high, but decreased for the second consecutive week.

- Metropolitan France:
  - Virological indicators and hospital admissions decreasing in all regions
  - Slight rise in positivity rate in the under-20 age group
  - Number of deaths still high
- Overseas France:
  - Incidence rate stabilising in Reunion Island

### Variants

- BA.5 omnipresent (93% of sequences in week 50 Flash Survey on 12 December); among its sub-lineages, BQ.1.1 continued to rise (70% vs 67% in week 49 Flash Survey)

### Prevention

- Vaccination on 2 January 2023 (Vaccin Covid data):
  - 16.3% of 60-79 year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant (21.8% of those eligible in the age group); 19.6% of 80+ year-olds had equally received this booster dose (23.2% of those eligible);
  - 32.7% of 60-79 year-olds and 21.0% of 80+ year-olds are considered protected by vaccination.
- Given that SARS-CoV-2 and winter viruses remain in active circulation, increased compliance with preventive measures is necessary:
  - 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 course, and flu vaccination
  - self-isolation in case of a positive test and/or symptoms;
  - continued application of precautionary measures, including wearing a face mask (particularly around vulnerable people and in enclosed spaces favourable to transmission such as public transport), hand washing and ventilation of enclosed spaces.

\*W52: unconsolidated data. Revised numbers for these indicators will feature in the next Epidemiological Update.

<sup>1</sup>Santé 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.

### SITUATION UPDATE

In week 52, virological indicators of SARS-CoV-2 circulation were down at national level and throughout metropolitan France. The incidence rate dropped sharply (-50%) to 210 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. It fell below the 50/100,000 mark in the under-20 age group and remained highest in older people. This drop in incidence rate occurred in a context of significantly reduced screening rates (1,110/100,000, -44%), particularly among the under-60s. The overall positivity rate continued to fall (18.9%, -2.5 points) despite a slight increase observed for the under-20 age group, which still had the lowest rate.

Indicators of healthcare use for suspected COVID-19 in SOS Médecins organisations and emergency departments followed the same trend, as did hospital admissions. Consolidated figures for these decreases will feature in the next Epidemiological Update. Consolidated data for the previous week showed a 16%-decrease in hospital admissions in week 51 (-14% in intensive care).

Omicron circulates almost exclusively in France and its BA.5 sub-lineage remains omnipresent. In metropolitan France, BA.5 (all sub-lineages combined) represented 93% of interpretable sequences in the Flash Survey for week 50 (12 December, based on 1,704 interpretable sequences). Among the sub-lineages of BA.5, detection of BQ.1.1 (including all further sub-lineages) continues to increase steadily, with 70% of interpretable sequences in the week 50 Flash Survey (vs 67% for the week 49 Flash Survey). More information is available in the [variants risk assessment of 14 December 2022](#).

On 2 January, 16.3% of 60-79 year-olds and 19.6% of 80+ year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant (21.8% and 23.2% of those eligible in the respective age groups)\* since it became available. Furthermore, 32.7% of 60-79 year-olds were considered protected by vaccination (most recent dose received within the last 6 months), as were 21.0% of 80+ year-olds (most recent dose received 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 95.6%, 86.2% and 10.1% for those working in nursing homes; 97.7%, 88.8% and 11.4% for those working in private practice; 96.6%, 88.3% and 11.6% for those working in health institutions\*\*\*.

In view of this context and the active circulation of several respiratory viruses, improved vaccination coverage for COVID-19 (particularly with the booster dose of bivalent vaccine adapted to the initial strain and Omicron) and for the flu is necessary among eligible persons. In addition, greater adherence to preventive measures – including wearing a mask – is needed, particularly to protect the most vulnerable. Compliance with other recommended measures also remains necessary in case of symptoms or a positive test.

*\*Method described in COVID-19 Epidemiological Update N° 145. \*\*All COVID-19 vaccines included. These proportions do not take into account the number of people infected with SARS-CoV-2 during this time. \*\*\*Method described in COVID-19 Epidemiological Update N° 147.*

## Graphs and tables

### [InfoCovidFrance](#)

[InfoCovidFrance](#) provides direct access to all indicators presented as graphs and tables along with a complementary weekly report including:

- **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](#)