

COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

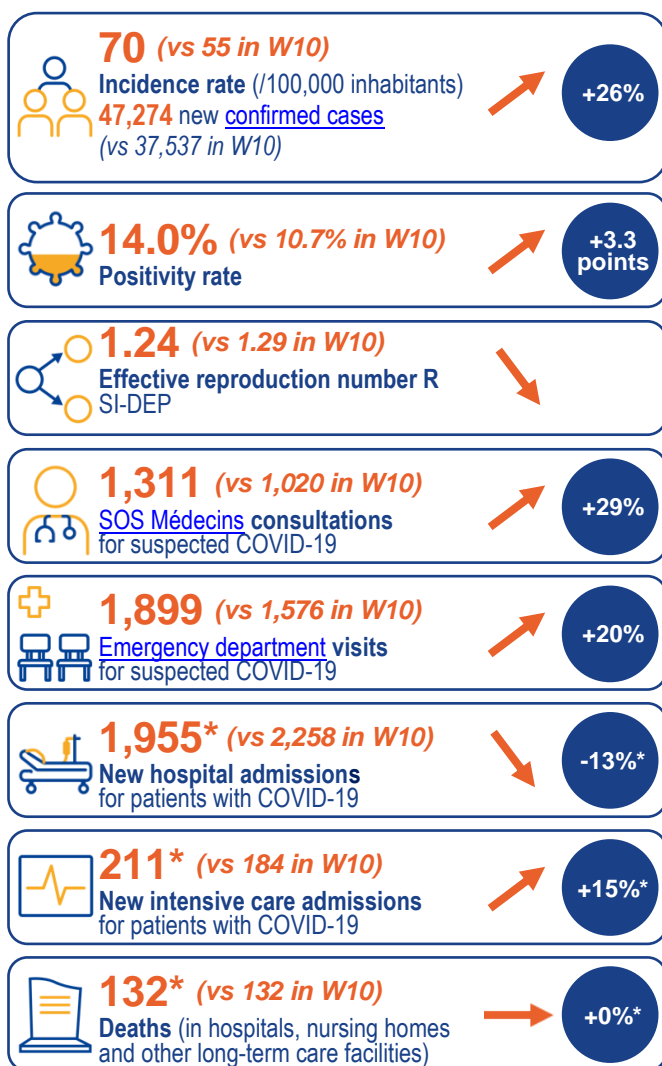
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As part of its surveillance, alert, and prevention missions, Santé publique France analyses and publishes COVID-19 data obtained from its network of partners¹ as well as its own studies and surveys. This report is based on data submitted to Santé publique France up to 22 March 2023.

Key numbers

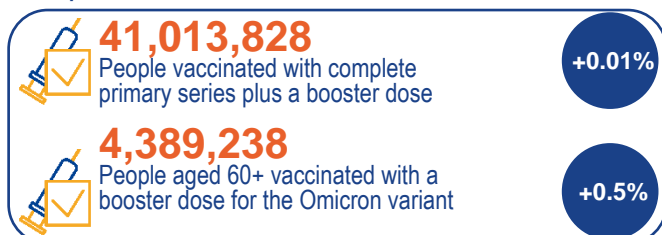
In week 11 (13-19 March 2023)

Compared to week 10 (6-12 March 2023)



On 20 March 2023

Compared to 13 March 2023



Key points

Epidemiological situation

In week 11, incidence and positivity rates (from SI-DEP virological data) continued to increase but remained at low levels. Indicators for emergency department visits and SOS Médecins consultations were on the rise. However, hospital admissions were decreasing.

- Metropolitan France:
 - Incidence and positivity rates rising in all age groups and in most regions
 - Hospital admission rate decreasing in most regions
- Overseas France:
 - Incidence and hospital admission rates remaining at very low levels

Variants

- The recombinant XBB was in majority with 71% of sequences in the week 9 Flash Survey (vs 54% in week 8), carried by 56% XBB.1.5 (vs 45%)
- BA.5 and its sub-lineages continued to decrease (20% in the week 9 Flash Survey vs 36% in week 8)
- All Omicron sub-lineages currently identified present similar characteristics

Prevention

- Vaccination on 20 March 2023 (Vaccin Covid data):
 - 23.2% of 60-79 year-olds and 25.9% of 80+ year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant
 - 25.4% of 60-79 year-olds had received a dose of vaccine in the last 6 months and 8.5% of 80+ year-olds in the last 3 months
- Given that SARS-CoV-2 currently remains 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;
 - continued application of precautionary measures, particularly in case of a positive test and/or symptoms.

*W11: 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 11 (13 to 19 March 2023)

SITUATION UPDATE

In week 11, incidence and positivity rates increased for the second consecutive week but remained at low levels, in a context of a moderate decrease in screening rate*. The number of emergency department visits was on the rise, as were consultations in the SOS Médecins primary care network. New hospital admissions were decreasing in the majority of regions. Due to the insufficient level of booster vaccination and the continuing active circulation of SARS-CoV-2, vaccinating target groups against COVID-19 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.

The increase in incidence and positivity rates observed at national level continued across all age groups. As in week 10, the incidence rate was again lowest among 0-19 year-olds, but it was also rising more markedly in this age group. The positivity rate remained lowest in the under-10 age group. The screening rate was increasing slightly among 0-19 year-olds, remained stable among 20-49 year-olds and was decreasing in the 50+ age group. Consultations for suspected COVID-19 were increasing in emergency departments and in the SOS Médecins primary care network, although less markedly than the previous week. In connection with the return to school, the increase was more marked among children than among adults (+41% vs +27% for SOS Médecins; +50% vs +17% for emergency department visits). In metropolitan France, incidence rates were rising in all regions except Corsica, with screening stable or slightly down depending on the region. New hospital admissions were decreasing in the majority of regions. In overseas France, the incidence rate was decreasing or stable at low levels. The number of new hospital admissions remained at a very low level and was falling in the majority regions.

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 retain very similar characteristics, hence remaining within this variant. In metropolitan France, the recombinant XBB (all sub-lineages included) is now the majority Omicron sub-lineage, with 71% of interpretable sequences in the week 9 Flash Survey from 27 February 2023 (vs 54% in the week 8 Flash Survey). The increase in XBB is driven by its sub-lineage XBB.1.5 which, together with its further sub-lineages, accounted for 56% of all interpretable sequences in the week 9 Flash Survey 2023 (vs 45% in week 8). Meanwhile, BA.5 and its sub-lineages continued to decrease, from 36% in the week 8 Flash Survey to 20% in week 9, particularly BQ.1.1 (from 31% in the week 8 Flash Survey to 16% in week 9). Detection of BA.2 sub-lineages, stable until now, seems to have started decreasing with 6% of sequences in the week 9 Flash Survey (vs 8% in week 8).

Vaccination coverage for booster doses adapted to the Omicron variant remained insufficient. On 20 March 2023, 23.2% of 60-79 year-olds and 25.9% of 80+ year-olds had received such a booster dose. At that date, 25.4% of 60-79 year-olds had received a vaccine dose within the last 6 months**, and 8.5% of 80+ year-olds within the last 3 months**. Vaccination coverage among health professionals for the booster adapted to the Omicron variant is estimated at 13.6% for those working in nursing homes, 14.5% for those working in private practice and 15.0% for those working in health institutions***.

Due to possible changes in the use of tests, particularly owing to changes in the screening strategy (including within hospitals) from February 2023, these indicators should be interpreted with caution. **All COVID-19 vaccines combined. * 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](#)