

COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

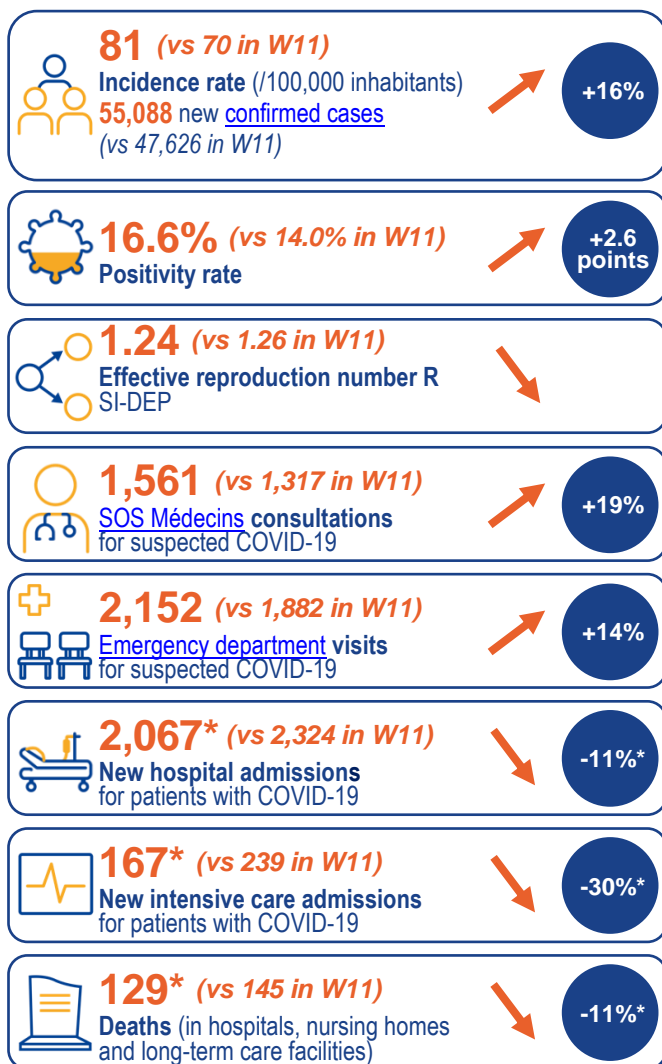
29 March 2023 / N° 160

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 29 March 2023.

Key numbers

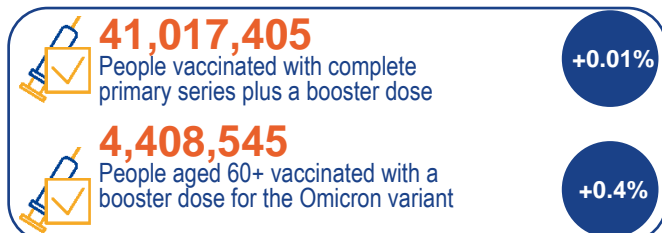
In week 12 (20-26 March 2023)

Compared to week 11 (13-19 March 2023)



On 27 March 2023

Compared to 20 March 2023



Key points

Epidemiological situation

In week 12, incidence and positivity rates (from SI-DEP virological data), as well as indicators for use of primary care and emergency services, continued to increase but less markedly than in the previous week. New hospital admissions were down in most regions.

- Metropolitan France:
 - Incidence and positivity rates rising in most age groups and regions
 - Hospital admission rate decreasing or stable in the majority of regions
- Overseas France:
 - Incidence and hospital admission rates remain very low

Variants

- The recombinant XBB.1.5 was in majority with 59% of sequences in the week 10 Flash Survey (vs 55% in week 9)
- BA.5 and its sub-lineages continued to decrease (17% in the week 10 Flash Survey vs 21% in week 9)

Prevention

- Vaccination on 27 March 2023 (Vaccin Covid data):
 - 23.3% of 60-79 year-olds and 26.0% of 80+ year-olds had received a booster dose adapted to the Omicron variant
 - 25.0% of 60-79 year-olds had received a dose of vaccine in the last 6 months and 7.1% of 80+ year-olds in the last 3 months
- Given that SARS-CoV-2 currently remains in active circulation, continued compliance with preventive measures is 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.

*W12: 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.

SITUATION UPDATE

In week 12, incidence and positivity rates (from SI-DEP virological data) continued to increase but remained at low levels, within a context of moderate decline in screening rate*. The number of emergency department visits was on the rise, as were consultations in the SOS Médecins primary care network, but less markedly than in the previous week. New hospitalisations were decreasing or stable in the majority of regions. Given the insufficient level of booster vaccination and the active circulation of SARS-CoV-2, there is still a need to increase COVID-19 vaccination within target groups. 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 but seemed to slow down. The incidence rate remained lowest among 0-19 year-olds and was decreasing in the under-10 age group. The positivity rate also remained lowest in the under-10 age group. The screening rate decreased in this age group, as well as in the 60+ age group, and was stable in the population aged 10-59 years. Consultations for suspected COVID-19 were increasing in emergency departments and in the primary care network SOS Médecins, but more moderately than in the previous week. In metropolitan France, depending on the region, incidence rates were increasing or stable and screening was decreasing or stable. New hospitalisations were down or stable in the majority of regions. In overseas France, the incidence rate was increasing or stable, with levels remaining low. The number of new hospital admissions remained at a very low level and was decreasing or stable in the majority regions.

The exclusive circulation of Omicron for more than a year now has led to an important change in the WHO classification system for SARS-CoV-2 variants. The lineages defined via the Pangolin classification (including the Omicron sub-lineages) are now evaluated independently of each other, using the Omicron parental lineage (B.1.1.529) as a reference. More information on the new classification is available in the [risk assessment of 22 March 2023](#). In metropolitan France, the recombinant XBB.1.5, classed VOI in the new classification, is now in majority, with 59% of interpretable sequences in the week 10 Flash Survey from 6 March 2023 (vs 55% in the week 9 Flash Survey). Meanwhile, BA.5 and its sub-lineages (including BQ.1) continued to decrease, from 21% in the week 9 Flash Survey to 17% in week 10. Detection of BA.2 sub-lineages (including CH.1.1) decreased, from 7% of interpretable sequences in the week 9 Flash Survey to 5% in week 10.

Vaccination coverage for booster doses adapted to the Omicron variant remained insufficient. On 27 March 2023, 23.3% of 60-79 year-olds and 26.0% of 80+ year-olds had received such a booster dose. At that date, 25.0% of 60-79 year-olds had received a vaccine dose within the last 6 months**, and 7.1% 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 13.7% for those working in nursing homes, 14.6% 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 since 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](#)