

COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE

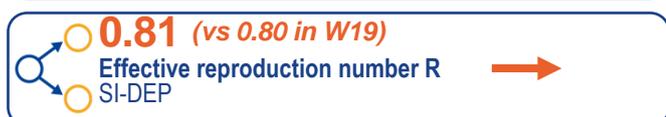
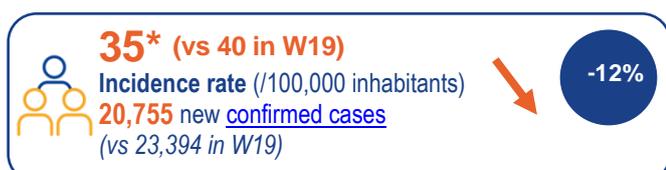
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As part of its surveillance, alert, and prevention missions, Santé publique France analyses and publishes COVID-19 data obtained from its network of partners¹ as well as its own studies and surveys. This report is based on data submitted to Santé publique France up to 23 May 2023.

Key numbers

In week 20 (15-21 May 2023)

Compared to week 19 (8-14 May 2023)



On 15 May 2023****

Compared to 9 May 2023



Key points

Epidemiological situation

In week 20, the positivity rate (based on SI-DEP virological data) increased slightly within a context of very low screening rates. Emergency department visits continued to fall, as did new hospital admissions.

- Metropolitan France:
 - Incidence rate* fell in all age groups and in most regions
 - Positivity rate increased slightly or remained stable in most age groups and regions
 - Rate of new hospital admissions dropped in almost all regions.
- Overseas France:
 - Highest incidence* and positivity rates in Reunion Island
 - New hospital admissions remained low

Variants

- The XBB.1.5 recombinant remained predominant and appeared to stabilise with 48% of sequences in the Flash Survey for week 18*** (vs 47% in the week 17 Flash Survey)
- XBB.1.9 falling (29% for the week 18*** Flash Survey vs 32% for the week 17 Flash Survey)
- The CH.1.1 and BQ.1 sub-lineages detected at low levels (1 and 2% in the week 18*** Flash Survey)

Prevention

- Vaccination on 15 May 2023 (Vaccin Covid data)****:
 - 23.8% of people aged 60-79 and 26.7% of people aged 80+ had received a booster vaccination for the Omicron variant
 - 19.1% of people aged 60-79 and 1.7% of people aged 80+ had received a shot less than 6 and 3 months previously, respectively.
- Within the current context of the pandemic and the spring vaccination campaign, observance of combined measures is still recommended:
 - up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination, through a booster shot with a bivalent vaccine (against the initial strain and the Omicron variant) for eligible individuals who have received a primary vaccine series;
 - continued application of protective measures, especially in the event of a positive COVID-19 test and/or symptoms, in order to protect vulnerable individuals.

*A correction was made to the incidence and screening rates from the week including the public holiday on 18 May to take into account the effect of this holiday on screening activity. **W20: unconsolidated data ***data from the week 18 Flash Survey are not consolidated and should be interpreted with caution. ****Due to a technical incident, the vaccine coverage indicators are not up-to-date.

¹ 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.

Week 20 (15 to 21 May 2023)

SITUATION UPDATE

In week 20, the positivity rate increased slightly (based on SI-DEP virological data) within a context of very low and falling screening rates*. The number of SOS Médecins consultations and emergency department visits for suspected COVID-19 continued to fall, along with new hospital admissions in most regions. Given the insufficient level of booster vaccines and the continuing circulation of SARS-CoV-2, vaccination against COVID-19 in targeted individuals remains necessary. In order to protect the most vulnerable, a booster shot for the Omicron variant has been recommended since 27 April 2023 as part of the spring campaign for people aged 80+, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities of all ages, as well as people who are immunocompromised and at very high risk for serious infection. Observance of protective measures and other recommended measures is still recommended, especially in the event of symptoms or a positive test, to protect vulnerable people.

At the national level, in week 20 the incidence rate corrected for the effect of the public holiday decreased, and the positivity rate increased slightly, with a very low corrected screening rate (233/100,000 inhabitants). The corrected incidence rate was falling across all age groups and was still lowest among people aged under 20. The positivity rate was increasing slightly in the majority of age groups, especially among 60-79 year-olds. The corrected screening rate continued to decrease across all age groups. The number of consultations for suspected COVID-19 continued to fall in emergency departments and in SOS Médecins organisations. In metropolitan France, the positivity rate was increasing or stable in most regions. Hospital admission rates were also down in the majority of regions. In overseas France, the incidence rate was down or stable in all regions and the positivity rate remained highest in Reunion Island. New hospital admissions remained very low.

In metropolitan France, the XBB.1.5 recombinant remained predominant and appeared to stabilise; it accounted for 48% of interpretable sequences in the week 18** Flash Survey (02/05/2023, based on 581 interpretable sequences) compared with 47% in the week 17 Flash Survey (24/04/2023, based on 911 interpretable sequences). Among all VUM classified variants, XBB.1.9 decreased (29% in the week 18** Flash Survey vs 32% in the week 17 Flash Survey). CH.1.1 and BQ.1 were still detected, but at low levels: they accounted respectively for 1% and 2% of interpretable sequences in the week 18** Flash Survey of 2023.

The level of booster shots for the Omicron variant remained insufficient. As of 15 May 2023, 23.8% of the population aged 60-79 and 26.7% of the population aged 80+ had received a booster shot. Furthermore, 19.1% of 60-79 year-olds had received a shot less than 6 months*** prior and 1.7% of people aged 80+ had received a shot less than 3 months*** prior. Vaccination coverage in health professionals for the booster shot for the Omicron variant were estimated at 13.9% for those working in nursing homes, 14.9% for professionals in private practice and 15.3% for those working in healthcare institutions****.

Given possible changes in the screening rate, especially in connection with changes in testing strategy since February 2023, these indicators must be interpreted with caution. **Data from the week 18 Flash Survey are not consolidated and should be interpreted with caution. *For all vaccines ****The method was previously 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**

Due to the positive development of the COVID-19 pandemic, publication of the COVID-19 Epidemiological Update will be suspended after next week's issue (31 May 2023).

The pandemic will continue to be tracked by Santé publique France and the indicators remain available at [InfoCovidFrance](#) and [Géodes](#).