



Jefferson County



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update

October 27, 2023



High Dose **Flu** Vaccine Clinic

Ages 65 and older*

October 29th: 2 to 4 p.m.

Larkspur Community Center
1600 SE Reed Market Road
Bend Oregon 97702

To schedule your appointment online,
visit our [website](#)

- ✓ Open to anyone 65 or older who is eligible for a flu shot
- ✓ Must have billable insurance
- ✓ Please call 541-699-5109, if you need assistance with registering or have questions

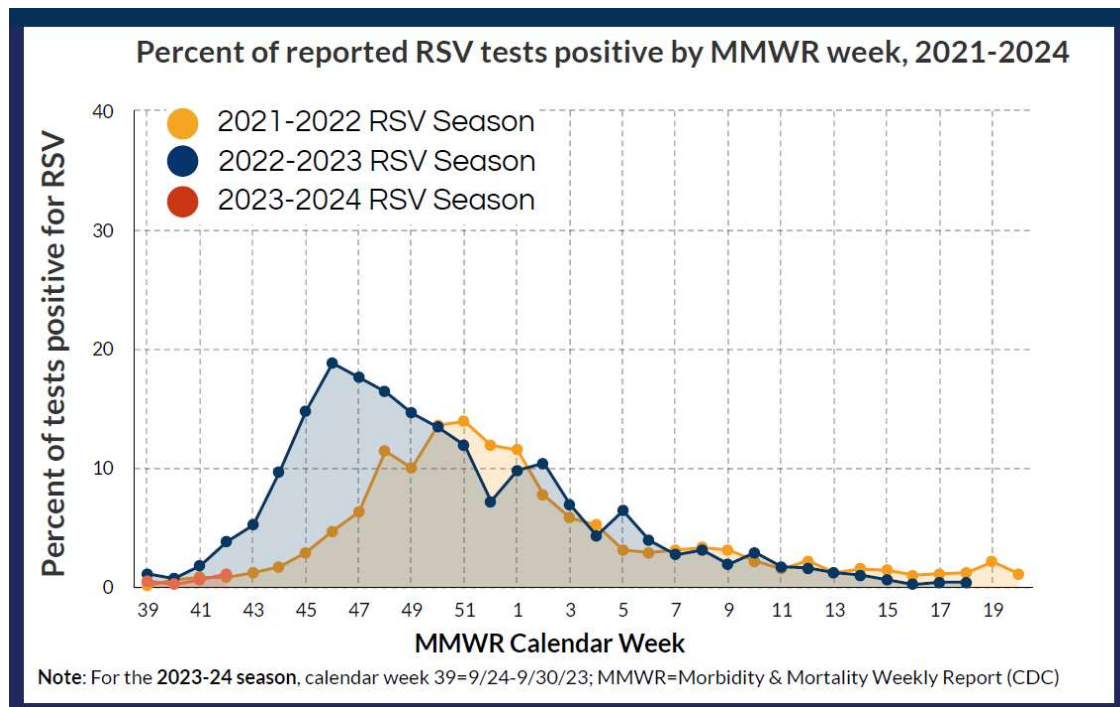
*High dose flu vaccine recommended for people 65+

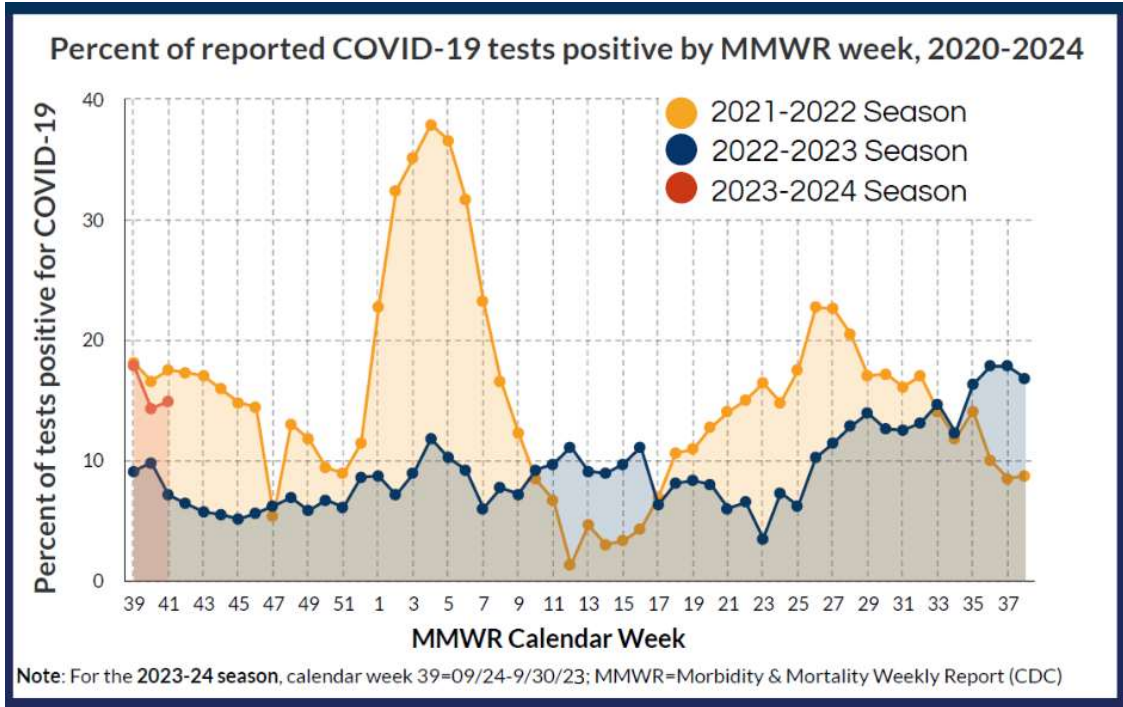
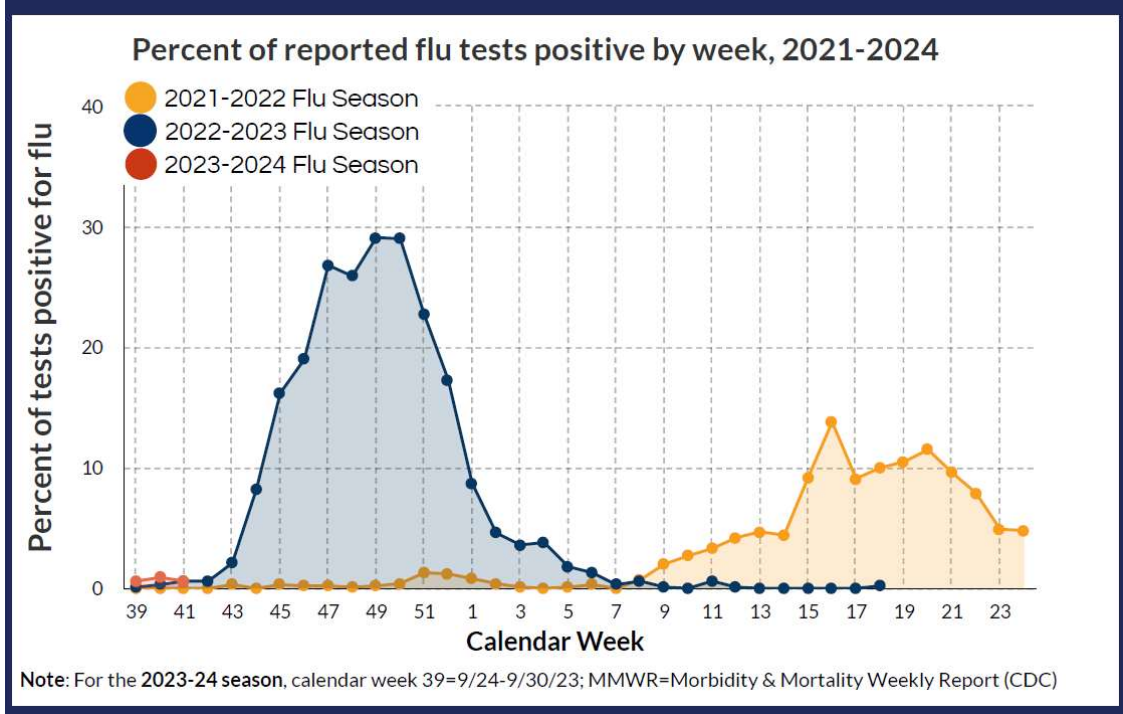
Now is the time to protect yourself from influenza, COVID-19 illness and RSV. Vaccines are becoming more widely available throughout Central Oregon including for those not insured. If you are having trouble making an appointment or have questions, contact the Central Oregon Health Services Hotline at (541) 699-5109.

**Central Oregon Respiratory Illness
Surveillance Reports Now Available**

Our regional epidemiologist monitors trends in viral activity by examining data from local labs and hospitals that report into the National Respiratory & Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS). This data helps compare trends over time in illnesses and the impacts on our medical system. [Influenza](#), [RSV](#) and [COVID-19](#) trends are reported by looking at several variables including total number of tests, percent of positive tests, and ER visits from respiratory illnesses. This week we see RSV and flu data are similar to the 2021-2022 season. It's too soon to know if these trends will continue through this season. Epidemiologists are still waiting to see if seasonal patterns emerge with COVID-19 like we typically see with other viruses, such as RSV and flu.

Another emerging surveillance tool is wastewater viral concentration monitoring. This technology can help us determine viral presence in our communities independent of individuals seeking testing. In the past, we have shared wastewater data for COVID-19 surveillance and are excited to now share similar data for RSV and flu. Samples are collected weekly and reported out on the [OHA dashboard](#).





Tools to navigate conversations with teens to Live Vape Free

Parents and guardians: did you know that you have the biggest impact on what a teenager decides about vaping, alcohol use, or other substances?

Even if it doesn't always seem like it, talking with your child early and often can make a big impact! Having good communication and clear rules can stop them from using, or help them reduce or quit, if they've already started.

Central Oregon has a new tool to help you with this!

For parents or concerned adults, the Live Vape FreeSM program offers online lessons adults can do at their own pace to talk to kids about vaping. It also has a chat for you to get help, tools, and information to learn more about vaping. If you know a teen who is already vaping, there's help to quit. You can find this free program at [Live Vape FreeSM](#).

For tips on [how to talk to your kids about substance use](#) visit the [Shared Future Coalition website](#) and [BestCare](#) to learn more about specific substances or for support.



**November 11-18, 2023 is Hunger
and Homelessness Outreach Week**



Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is an annual program where people come together across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness.

How do Hunger and Homelessness affect Central Oregonians?



Food Insecurity in Central Oregon

In an average year, 1 in 8 Oregonians experience food insecurity, which is defined as the state of being without reliable access to a

sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Here in Central Oregon, we face high food insecurity throughout the tri-county area. Combined statistics from Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties indicate that 13% of our neighbors are experiencing food insecurity. Food Bank data from the tri-county area shows that 28,000 people are visiting food pantries for assistance on a monthly basis. Of the 28,000 experiencing food insecurity, around 8,000 people do not qualify for federal assistance.

How can we help?

A wide variety of community organizations, including Deschutes County Health Services, are responding to the Hunger and Homelessness needs in our community. If you are interested in helping, please feel free to reach out to any of the organizations listed in this article.

Here is a snapshot of the community response:

Did you know that **Family Kitchen** serves over 14,000 meals each month? Volunteer cooks are always needed! Family Kitchen serves meals at the downtown Bend location, as well as nearly 3,000 fresh to-go meals that are delivered *each week* to the following locations throughout Central Oregon:

- Lighthouse Shelter and Navigation Center
- Stepping Stone Shelter
- COVO Camp Check-ins
- Redmond Collective Action
- Home deliveries
- Low income housing
- Additional camp deliveries

What about homelessness?

In 2023, Central Oregon's unhoused population grew to its highest tally on record, according to the annual Point in Time Count completed in January 2023. More than 1,600 people experienced homeless on a given night in Central Oregon, which is up from 1,286 in 2022. The majority of people houseless people in the region are living in Bend — 1,012 people compared to last year's estimated 785 — and they are not living in a shelter.

Forty-four percent of houseless people in Central Oregon have lived in the region for 20 years or more, and 68% have lived in the region for five years or more, according to the data. The majority of people experiencing homelessness in Central Oregon — 77% — became homeless while living in Central Oregon.

This year's data gives a glimpse of the possible reasons people might be homeless. Almost 50% of the people included in the count have at least one disability or disabling condition. Another contributing factor

is that Central Oregon's population grew in 2021 and contributed to higher rents and fewer available homes.



High Desert Food and Farm Alliance's Veggie Rx Program is

back! VeggieRx is a FREE fresh produce prescription program that helps improve healthy eating habits for individuals experiencing food insecurity and who are diagnosed with diet-modifiable disease(s). Participants receive ten weeks of fresh locally grown vegetables/fruits, nutrition education, and one-on-one support from HDFFA's Registered Dietitian. Since the program began in 2018, they have invested \$85,623 in fresh food from local farmers, with a total impact of \$148,985 on the local economy.

High Desert Food and Farm Alliance (HDFFA) also runs the [Grow & Give](#) program, a fresh food drive where 15,000-30,000 pounds of fresh produce is collected every year from local farmers, gardeners, and community members that is redistributed to Neighbor Impact's food bank, serving 40% of their clientele during the growing season. In 2021, they collected over 30,000 lbs., which was the equivalent of 26,000+ meals for Central Oregonians.

HDFFA also runs the [Fresh Harvest Kit](#) program, which are ready-to-make meal kits available at food pantries. Each kit contains farm fresh vegetables, pantry staples (such as pasta, tuna, or beans), a seasoning packet from [Savory Spice](#), and a recipe card to create a nutritious and delicious meal on a budget. HDFFA collaborates with local farms and hunger relief agencies to offer these kits at local food pantries and community organizations.



Deschutes County runs the **WIC** program, which provides free food, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support to pregnant women and families with kids under five. [See if you are eligible.](#)

Deschutes County also runs the **SNAP** program (formerly called food stamps), which provides a food benefit card that works like a debit card to buy groceries for people who qualify. [Apply here](#) or [see if you're eligible.](#)

Double Up Food Bucks

Already enrolled in SNAP? Double your SNAP dollars when you buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores in Oregon. Visit doubleuporegon.org to see participating locations in Central Oregon.

Free and Reduced School Meals

All public schools in Oregon offer free and reduced school lunches to students who qualify. Visit the [Department of Education website](#) to see if your student qualifies.

Summer Meal Program

Summer Meals are available in hundreds of communities throughout Oregon, offering free meals and snacks to ALL kids 1-18. Find your local meal sites [here](#).

Resources for Businesses and Organizations

Are you a food service business looking to donate excess food to a non-profit organization? Join the many Oregon grocers, restaurants, caterers, and food service companies that are helping people who experience hunger. Check out resources for businesses donating food here:

[Donating food | Metro \(oregonmetro.gov\)](#)

[For Businesses and Organizations | Oregon Food Bank](#)

Thrive Central Oregon provides lists of dozens of other community resources related to housing, shelter, basic needs, and food access. Read more here:



Our Health Equity & Engagement team is out and about in our community.

Come visit and let us know what you would like to know more about!

Public Health Resources:

- Central Oregon public health web resources:
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)

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