

Together We Thrive

Arizona and COVID-19: Fall 2023

Dr. Howard J. Eng
Associate Professor Emeritus in Public Health (retired)

Unlike the previous three summer COVID-19 case surges, no Arizona and Pima County surges occurred this summer. There were weekly cases fluctuations, but the case numbers were low (see Figures 1 and 2). The COVID-19 is in its endemic phase.

Figure 1. Arizona Weekly COVID-19 Cases: January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023

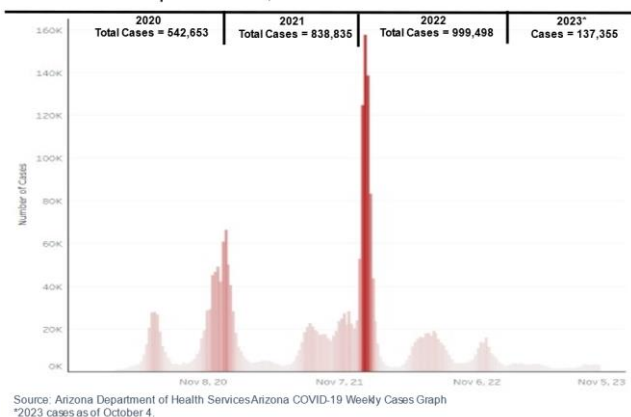
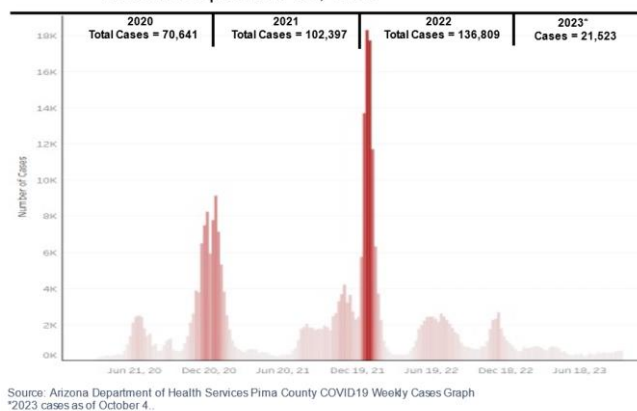


Figure 2. Pima County Weekly COVID-19 Cases: February 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the county numbers of COVID-19 hospitalization per 100,000 population for Pima County and most of Arizona were low for the week ending on September 30 (see Figure 4). Only Mohave and Apache counties had medium hospital admissions levels. The definition of low county number level of COVID-19 hospitalization per 100,000 population is below 10 admissions.

Figure 3. CDC COVID-19 Hospitalization per 100,000: Week Ending Sept 23, 2023

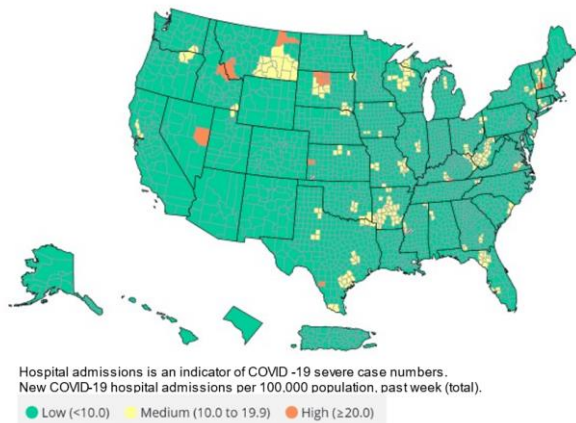
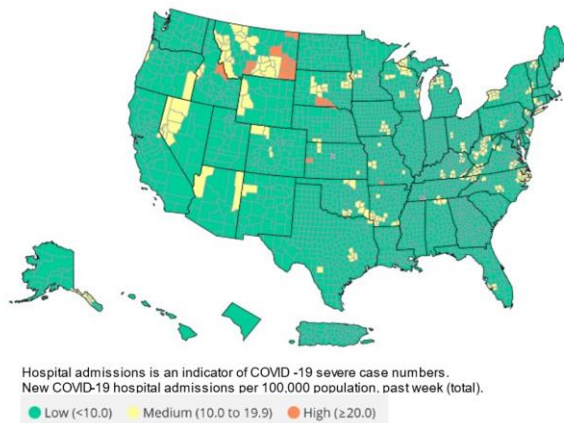


Figure 4. CDC COVID-19 Hospitalization per 100,000: Week Ending Sept 30, 2023



Most cases are *mild* (no symptoms) or *moderate* (sick, but can recover at home), and few cases are *severe* (require hospitalization and/or result in death). Arizona and Pima County past four-week COVID-19 case, hospitalization, and death numbers are shown in Tables 1 and 2. For the past two weeks, there were increases in the number of cases, but the hospitalization and deaths remain low.

Table 1. Arizona Total and Weekly Numbers of COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths

<i>Date</i>	<i>Total Cases</i>	<i>Weekly Case</i>	<i>Total Hospital</i>	<i>Weekly Hospital</i>	<i>Total Deaths</i>	<i>Weekly Deaths</i>
09-13-2023	2,508,168	4,068	142,656	384	33,749	18
09-20-2023	2,511,308	3,140	143,050	394	33,757	8
09-27-2023	2,514,694	3,386	143,439	389	33,774	17
10-04-2023	2,518,341	3,647	143,837	398	33,788	14

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services COVID-19 Dashboard.
 Arizona 2022 population estimate is 7,359,197, July 1, 2022 – U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2. Pima County Total and Weekly Numbers of COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths

<i>Date</i>	<i>Total Cases</i>	<i>Weekly Case</i>	<i>Total Hospital</i>	<i>Weekly Hospital</i>	<i>Total Deaths</i>	<i>Weekly Deaths</i>
09-13-2023	329,678	577	16,032	35	4,399	4
09-20-2023	330,148	470	16,070	38	4,399	0
09-27-2023	330,713	565	16,113	43	4,400	1
10-04-2023	331,370	657	16,152	39	4,401	1

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services COVID-19 Dashboard.
 Pima County 2022 population estimate is 1,057,597, July 1, 2022 – U.S. Census Bureau.

This is a good time to build up your immunity before the COVID-19, flu, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) season in late fall and winter by staying healthy. You should eat healthy, exercise regularly, stay hydrated -- drink plenty of water, get plenty of fresh outdoor air, reduce your stress, and get enough of sleep/rest to build up your immune system.

The COVID-19 vaccine reduces the risks of getting a severe case, but you can still get the virus. Those who are immune compromised, have severe medical conditions, adult 65 and older, work in high-risk settings, and are obese have the highest risk of getting a severe case and need to get the updated COVID-19 vaccine (XBB1.5 monovalent) and flu shot. Three companies offer the updated vaccine in the U.S. (Pfizer BioNtech, Moderna, or Novavax). There is also an RSV vaccine available. You should check with your doctor, primary care provider, or pharmacist which vaccines you need to get.

During the summer and fall, the *Together We Thrive* Project have been addressing the mental and social health effects associated of COVID-19 by offering improving social health classes, community COVID-19 presentations, and coping with the mental health effects presentations. The next presentations will be “*What Do We Know About COVID-19 and How to Deal with COVID-19 Today*” on October 14 from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center (TCCC) and “*Coping with Mental Effects Associated with COVID-19*” on October 21 from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at the TCCC.

There will be weekly case fluctuations, but the numbers of severe COVID-19 cases and deaths in Arizona and Pima County remain low because of the high level of population immunity, the availability of drugs in treating the virus, and most of the new variant cases are mild or moderate.

Be safe, and stay healthy, calm, and positive.