



Executive summary

26 April 2023

Two of the four metrics used to monitor COVID-19 trends increased over the past week and two remained stable or decreased. Reported case rates for the week ending 23 April 2023 decreased compared to the previous week. In the week ending 16 April, hospital admissions increased, mortality remained stable and RNA in wastewater increased.

In the three weeks up until 31 March 2023, XBB was the most common variant, accounting for 52% of sequenced cases. XBB has been growing because of a specific variant of XBB called XBB.1.5, which is responsible for 36% of all cases. Other XBB lineages, including XBB.1.9.1 and XBB.1.16 are present in New Zealand and are being tracked. The second most common variant, CH.1.1 was responsible for 33% of all cases.



Key insights

National Trends

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 33.7 per 100,000 population for the week ending 23 April 2023. This is a decrease from the previous week (38.8 per 100,000 as of 16 April 2023). The proportion of infections reported as cases is unknown and may vary by factors such as age and ethnicity.
Wastewater	The viral RNA in wastewater for the week ending 16 April 2023 increased compared to the previous week. Please visit the ESR website for information on wastewater trends. ¹
Hospitalisations*	In the week ending 16 April 2023, the 7-day rolling average of hospital admissions was 0.98 per 100,000 population; this is an increase compared to the previous week (0.91 per 100,000 as of 09 April 2023).
Mortality**	As of 16 April 2023, there were 254 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 2,419 deaths during 2022 and 49 deaths prior to 2022. The mortality rate, as of the week ending 16 April, was stable at 16 deaths compared to 15 deaths in the previous week (09 April 2023).
Variants of Concern	Please refer to Genomics Insights Report #36, released 06 April 2023. ²

Māori

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 29.8 per 100,000 population for the week ending 23 April 2023. The rate decreased compared to the previous week, which was 33.0 per 100,000.
Hospitalisations*	The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 16 April 2023 was 0.92 per 100,000 population, increasing from the previous week (0.76 per 100,000).
Mortality**	As of 16 April 2023, there were 26 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 201 deaths during 2022 and 15 deaths prior to 2022.

Pacific peoples

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 23.0 per 100,000 population for the week ending 23 April 2023. The rate increased compared to the previous week, which was 18.8 per 100,000.
Hospitalisations*	The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 16 April 2023 was 0.72 per 100,000 population, stable from the previous week (0.76 per 100,000).

¹ <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/covid19-insights/wastewater-surveillance-dashboard/>

² <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/covid19-insights/genomics-insights/>



Mortality**

As of 16 April 2023, there were 4 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023.
There were 133 deaths during 2022 and 4 deaths prior to 2022.

* Hospital admissions data provides information on hospitalisations “for” COVID-19. Data pertaining to recent trends (up to 90 days) is provisional. Admissions may be re-coded as hospitalised “with” COVID-19 and removed from the dataset.

** The mortality figures are for deaths attributed to COVID-19. Recent trends should be interpreted with caution to account for death coding delays.