

## Pneumonia Hospitalizations Surged Across Canada

New national data shows a significant rise in pneumonia hospitalizations across Canada last year, with children and youth experiencing the steepest increase.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), pneumonia hospitalizations increased by nearly one-third between April 2024 and March 2025 compared to the previous year. Rates now exceed pre-pandemic levels across all age groups.

The most dramatic jump was among children and youth aged 5 to 17. Hospitalizations in this group rose by 143 percent - more than doubling from 2,698 cases to 6,547.

Adults were also affected. CIHI reports hospitalizations rose by 34 percent for adults aged 18 to 64 and by 22 percent for seniors over 65.

Healthcare providers say the data confirms what they experienced on the ground during last year's respiratory season.

Experts point to several overlapping factors that may have contributed to the spike:

- A severe influenza season appears to have played a major role. Viral pneumonia can develop as a direct complication of the flu, and influenza can also make people more vulnerable to bacterial pneumonia by weakening the respiratory tract.
- An unusual surge in "walking pneumonia," caused by mycoplasma pneumoniae bacteria. While typically milder with symptoms like cough, fever, and fatigue, the sheer number of cases meant more children required hospital care than in most years.
- Changes in immunity may also be playing a role. Reduced exposure to common bacteria during pandemic restrictions could mean people are now encountering strains their immune systems don't recognize as easily.

While it's too early to know if this year will follow the same trend, experts emphasize that prevention is key, especially for children and older adults, including staying up to date on routine vaccinations, including those that protect against common causes of severe pneumonia.

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### Sources:

1. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/article/pneumonia-hospitalizations-rose-dramatically-last-year-canadian-data-shows/>

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