

The US is experiencing the mildest flu season in memory. Here's why

The U.S. is seeing historically low levels of influenza this season, which started in September 2020.

This time last year, the national map of flu activity published by the CDC showed so many active cases that some states had burned right through red to a dark purple for “very high” activity. This year, the map is a calm green with hardly a blip on the public health radar. Public health labs across the U.S. reported a grand total of 3 cases of flu in the U.S. last week, out of nearly 16,000 samples tested. Clinical laboratories, which tested nearly 25,000 samples, found just 14 flu cases.

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“The question is why, and the answer is pretty interesting,” [infectious disease specialist Isaac] Bogoch says.

First, he says, there are the precautions people have been taking for COVID, like masking, [social distancing](#), and frequent hand-washing. Sure, not everybody is doing these things, but many are. “I don’t think we can ignore that,” he says.

Secondly, many people seem to have heeded public health advice to get a [flu vaccine](#).

“At least in Canada, there was massive uptake of the [flu vaccine](#) this year,” Bogoch says.

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