



CDC flu report: 4 more children have died, flu widespread in 47 states

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

Editor's note: An updated flu story is available at <http://ow.ly/I8cj30nlz2a>.

Four more children have died of flu, bringing the total to 28, according to **new data** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Flu is widespread in 47 states, and the **CDC estimates** 13.2 million to 15.2 million people have gotten sick this season.

"Activity is elevated across the U.S., and we do expect significant flu activity to continue for several more weeks," CDC epidemiologist Alicia P. Budd, M.P.H., said during a Feb. 5 **Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity webinar on flu**.

About 4.3% of outpatient clinic visits were for flu during the week ending Feb. 2, up from 3.8% the week before and above the national baseline of 2.2%.

The CDC estimates 155,000 to 186,000 people have been hospitalized this season.

"While this is classified as a low severity season, I think it's important to remember even low severity flu seasons can have significant impacts on morbidity and mortality," Budd said.

Children ages 4 and under have a cumulative hospitalization rate of 33.5 per 100,000 children, topping the rate of 20.1 per 100,000 in the overall population. Among children with available data, about one-third had an underlying condition, most commonly asthma.

Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 has been predominant this season for most of the country. In the two most recent H1 predominant seasons, 2015-'16 and 2013-'14, final hospitalization rates across all ages were 31 and 35 per 100,000 people, respectively, according to Budd.

"Where we are right now is nowhere close to that yet, so we do expect these hospitalization rates to continue to increase as the season progresses, but we certainly don't expect to see rates anywhere near the record-breaking rates we saw in the H3 predominant season we had last year," she said.

The CDC and the Academy recommend everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu. Inactivated influenza vaccine is the primary vaccine choice, while quadrivalent live attenuated influenza vaccine may be used for children who would not otherwise receive a vaccine, according to **AAP policy**.

Resources

- ["Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2018-2019"](#)
- [AAP News story "How to code for flu vaccine, administration in 2018-'19 season"](#)
- [Information from the CDC about flu](#)
- [Information for parents on flu vaccine from HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [AAP News stories on flu](#)
- [Pediatrics seasonal flu article collection](#)