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AAP News

CDC: Young children hospitalized for flu at highest rates, 7 have died

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

Editor's note: For the latest flu coverage, visit <https://www.aappublications.org/collection/influenza>.

Young children are bearing the brunt of flu so far this season and seven children have died, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

About 7.7 per 100,000 children under age 5 years have been hospitalized for flu, the highest rate of any age group, the CDC said in its [weekly flu report](#). Across all ages, the rate was 2.9 per 100,000 people.

Overall, about 2.7% of visits to outpatient clinics and emergency departments last week were flu-related, rising above the baseline of 2.2%. Widespread flu activity was reported in six states plus Guam. Another 18 states reported regional flu activity.

Flu activity is expected to continue rising and follows an especially severe 2017-'18 season in which a record-breaking 185 children died.

"Severe flu outcomes are a somber reminder of how serious flu can be, even for otherwise healthy people," CDC officials said in a [post in their flu website](#). "Flu vaccination protects against flu illness and reduces the risk of flu complications, including flu-associated hospitalization, admissions to the intensive care unit, and even death in children."

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](#). About 46% of children had been vaccinated against flu as of mid-November.

So far this fall, the most common virus has been influenza A (H1N1) pdm09, which the CDC said "has been associated with significant illness and severe illness among young children." However, flu vaccine proved to be highly effective against H1N1 last season.

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](#)