



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

AAP News

CDC: 5 more children have died of flu; 149 total

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

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

The number of children who have died of flu this season rose to 149 following reports of five more deaths.

Deaths among children are higher than during the same period in every other season since reporting started in 2004-'05 with the exception of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, according to a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) report](#). Nearly two-thirds of the deaths were due to influenza B viruses, which are known to cause severe illness in children.

Hospitalization rates for children also are unusually high. Children ages 4 and under have been hospitalized at a rate of 92.5 per 100,000 children, the highest on record for this point in the season. Rates for children ages 5-17 are 23.7 per 100,000 children, the highest in recent seasons except the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

Overall, about 5.8% of outpatient visits were for flu during the week ending March 14, up slightly from 5.2% the week before. However, the CDC noted the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 may have led more people to seek medical care for respiratory illnesses. Flu activity reported by clinical laboratories continues to decrease.

The CDC estimates about 38 million people have gotten sick, 390,000 have been hospitalized and 23,000 have died this season.

The AAP and CDC recommend everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated. Physicians with high-risk patients who have contracted the virus should treat them promptly with antivirals.

Resources

- [AAP policy "Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2019-2020"](#)
- [Information from the CDC about flu](#)
- [Information for parents on flu vaccine from HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [AAP News stories on flu](#)
- [Information on flu from the AAP Red Book](#)