



## CDC reports first pediatric flu-related deaths of 2021-'22 season

MMMM d, yyyy

Steve Schering, Staff Writer

Article type: [News](#)

Topics: [Infectious Diseases](#), [Influenza](#), [Vaccine/Immunization](#)

---

The first two pediatric influenza-associated deaths for the 2021-'22 season have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), according to [Flu View](#), the CDC's weekly surveillance report. Both deaths were reported in mid-December.

The first pediatric death was associated with an influenza A (H3) virus and occurred during the week ending Dec. 11, 2021. The second pediatric death was associated with an influenza A virus, for which no subtyping was performed, and occurred during the week ending Dec. 18, 2021.

The majority of viruses detected continue to be A(H3N2), according to the report. Most influenza A(H3N2) virus infections have occurred in children and young adults ages 5-24 years. However, the number of infections is increasing in other age groups as well.

The positivity rate for specimens collected Dec. 12-18 was 5.6%, up from 3.8% one week prior, according to the report. Flu hospitalizations also are increasing. The cumulative hospitalization rate was 1.4 per 100,000 population, which is nearly double the overall cumulative hospitalization rate reported during the 2020-'21 season.

Nationwide, 3.1% of outpatient visits reported during the week ending Dec. 18 through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to a respiratory illness that included fever plus a cough or sore throat. The percentage of visits for respiratory illness reported in ILINet are trending upward for all age groups, according to the report.

The CDC report indicates that influenza activity continues to increase nationally but varies by region. The eastern and central parts of the country are seeing the most activity.

As of Dec. 17, 2021, 172 million doses of flu vaccine had been distributed, the CDC reported. Flu vaccines are designed to protect against an influenza A(H1N1) virus, an influenza A(H3N2) virus and two different influenza B viruses.

While preliminary data suggest that vaccine effectiveness against currently circulating H3N2 viruses may be reduced this season, vaccination is still likely to offer some protection, including against serious flu illness and death.

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

### **Resources**

- [Information on flu from the CDC](#)
- [CDC FAQ about 2021-'22 flu season](#)
- [Information for parents on flu vaccine from HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [Information on flu from the AAP \*Red Book\*](#)
- [Flu vaccine locations near you](#)