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## Pediatric flu deaths rise to 10 as virus activity increases

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Flu activity is increasing, and two more children have died, according to [data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

The additional pediatric deaths put the total at 10 this season. Overall, roughly 2.7 million people have gotten sick from the flu this season, 26,000 have been hospitalized and 1,500 have died, the CDC estimates.

The cumulative hospitalization rate of 5.5 per 100,000 people is higher than last season but lower than the four most recent pre-pandemic seasons.

About 5.8% of clinical lab specimens were positive for flu during the week ending March 5, up from 4.1% the previous week. The central and south-central parts of the country have the highest positivity rates.

About 1.6% of outpatient visits to a health care provider were due to a respiratory illness last week, which has increased from the previous week but remains below baseline. The highest rates were seen in children under 5 years.

Most of the influenza viruses detected have been influenza A(H3N2) and are genetically closely related to the vaccine virus. However, a recent CDC analysis showed flu vaccine was not effective in reducing the risk of an outpatient visit for illness caused by influenza A(H3N2) viruses. Vaccine effectiveness in preventing an outpatient visit for influenza A(H3N2) is 16%, according to [interim estimates from the CDC](#). However, the confidence interval is -16% to 39%. The CDC continues to recommend the flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older as it can prevent severe illness from flu.

[CDC data show](#) about 52.5% of children have been vaccinated this season. Coverage is about 11 percentage points lower for Black children than White children.

The CDC also is monitoring cases of [highly pathogenic avian influenza A\(H5N1\)](#), which have been reported in wild birds in 16 states and in commercial and backyard poultry in 12 states. People are rarely infected with avian influenza. One such case was reported in the United Kingdom this year, but no human cases have been reported in the U.S.

### **Resources**

- [Information on flu from the CDC](#)
- [CDC FAQ about the 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](#)