



AAP not changing flu vaccine recommendations for 2022-'23

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Article type: [News](#)

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

The AAP's flu vaccine recommendations for the 2022-'23 season will mirror the current season with no preference for any one product.

Experts also are calling for vaccination to continue this season. As COVID-19 mitigation measures are relaxed, flu activity is increasing in most of the country and 13 children have died.

"Kids experience really substantial morbidity from flu, including hospitalization and death," said Kristina Bryant, M.D., FAAP, influenza lead for the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases. "We also know that children play a key role in the transmission of flu within households and within the community, so it remains really important for children 6 months and older to be immunized."

The AAP recommendations include the following:

- Children 6 months and older should be vaccinated.
- Any licensed influenza vaccine appropriate by age and health status can be used.
- The AAP does not prefer any product over another for children and adolescents with no contraindications.
- Children who are eligible for both a flu and COVID-19 vaccine can receive them at the same visit.

The recommendations are in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which is not expected to make changes when it meets in June.

The AAP released recommendations now so that pediatricians can pre-book vaccines. It will release its annual influenza policy statement in *Pediatrics* later this year.

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 this season. Most of the influenza viruses detected have been influenza A(H3N2) and are genetically closely related to the vaccine virus. However, a circulating subgroup is antigenically distinct.

The World Health Organization and the Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee are recommending a different H3N2 virus for next season's vaccine. In the meantime, the AAP and CDC continue to recommend vaccination this season.

"Even when influenza vaccine doesn't prevent mild illness, it can still protect against severe illness, hospitalization and death," said Dr. Bryant, hospital epidemiologist at Norton Children's Hospital in Louisville, Ky., and professor of pediatrics at the University of Louisville. "It's also important to realize the season isn't over."

The [CDC reported today](#) that most of the country is experiencing an increase in influenza activity, and three more children have died.

About 6.8% of clinical lab specimens were positive for flu during the week ending March 12, up from 5.8% the previous week. About 1.7% of outpatient visits to a health care provider were due to a respiratory illness, up from 1.6%. The highest rates were seen in children under 5 years.

The cumulative hospitalization rate of 5.9 per 100,000 people is higher than last season but lower than the four most recent pre-pandemic seasons.

Overall, the CDC estimates roughly 2.9 million people have gotten sick from the flu this season, 28,000 have been hospitalized and 1,700 have died.

[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.

"We don't have vaccines for many respiratory viruses that affect kids," Dr. Bryant said, "but we do have a vaccine for flu, so we should protect children when we can."

Resources

- [AAP policy *Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2021–2022*](#)
- [AAP technical report *Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2021–2022*](#)
- [Information on flu from the CDC](#)
- [CDC FAQs 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](#)