

CDC: 136 children have died of flu; virus activity still high

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

Pediatric flu deaths climbed to 136 after 11 more were reported last week, according to **new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**.

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.

Hospitalization rates for children also are unusually high. Children ages 4 and under have been hospitalized at a rate of 84.9 per 100,000 children, the highest on record for this point in the season.

Overall, flu activity decreased for the third consecutive week but remains higher than usual. About 5.3% of outpatient clinic visits were for flu during the week ending Feb. 29 down from 5.5% the week before. Activity is high in 40 states and widespread in 48 states.

Across all ages, the CDC estimates 34 million people have gotten sick, 350,000 have been hospitalized and 20,000 have died.

Influenza B has been most common among children this season and is known to be severe for this age group. About two-thirds of pediatric deaths were due to influenza B. For the overall population, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 recently surpassed influenza B/Victoria as the predominant virus.

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](#)

