

**American Academy of Pediatrics
What's the Latest with the Flu
October 2018 Message for Child Care Providers**

2018-2019 Influenza Season

Each year, millions of children get sick with influenza ([flu](#)), which can result in hospitalization or death. It's time to get vaccinated against flu and prepare your child care center for the 2018-2019 flu season.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges all children 6 months of age and older, their parents, and all child care providers to get a flu vaccine before the start of each flu season. See the AAP [public service announcement](#).

Things you Need to Know About This Year's Flu Season

1. The AAP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone 6 months and older get a seasonal flu vaccine *every year*. Flu vaccination is the single best way for children, parents, and child care staff to reduce flu illness and its potentially serious complications.
2. Get your flu vaccination by the end of October. It's good to be protected as soon as possible since you never know when flu viruses will begin to circulate in your community.
3. The flu vaccine (trivalent or quadrivalent) protects against 3 or 4 flu viruses. Flu vaccines include the viruses that research suggests will be most common in the US this flu season. The quadrivalent vaccine protects against the same 3 viruses that are in the trivalent vaccine and a second influenza B virus.
4. For the 2018-2019 season, the AAP recommends the flu shot as the primary vaccine choice for all children. In addition to the shot, though, the nasal spray vaccine is once again available. However, the AAP recommends the nasal spray vaccine be used if the child would otherwise not get any flu vaccine at all.
5. [Antiviral drugs](#) are prescription medicines that can be used to treat the flu. They can shorten a person's flu illness, make it milder, and can prevent serious complications. Antivirals work best when started during the first couple days after onset of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are at high risk of serious flu complications, are very sick, or are hospitalized. Antivirals to treat the flu can be given to children of all ages and pregnant women.
6. Policies in your child care center or home can limit the spread of influenza. Implement everyday preventive actions like good [respiratory etiquette](#), [hand washing](#); and [cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting](#). For child care providers, review policies on exclude [children](#) and [caregivers](#) who have respiratory symptoms (cough, runny nose, or sore throat) and fever.

Why Vaccination is Important

Children younger than 5 years of age (and especially those under 2 years of age) are at an increased risk of hospitalization due to influenza. Infants younger than 6 months are too young to get their own flu shot. The best way to protect these very young children is for all family members and caregivers to get a flu vaccine each year. This is called "[cocooning](#)", and it is especially important for adults who care for infants younger than 6 months.

Children who have chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes or neurologic conditions, are also at higher risk for serious complications due to influenza. Parents and caregivers can help protect more vulnerable children by vaccinating both the children and themselves.

Flu shots may be given to pregnant women at any time during pregnancy. Flu vaccines have a long and safe track record of protecting pregnant women and her baby after birth from serious illness and complications from flu. By getting a flu shot during pregnancy, a mother passes on protection against flu to her newborn baby that will last through the first several months of life. In addition, pregnant women are at high risk of severe illness from influenza themselves, as changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy make pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum) more prone to severe illness and even hospitalization from flu.

Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide (4th Edition)

This [AAP manual](#) provides child care directors, teachers, parents, and caregivers with important information about the prevention and management of influenza and other infectious diseases that circulate in group care settings. The guide contains helpful reference guides, including quick reference sheets on specific conditions or diseases. Detailed chapters address infection control measures, immunizations, and inclusion/exclusion criteria. Information within this manual can be used to implement new strategies within the center.

Resources

- [AAP Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards](#)
- [AAP Flu: A Guide for Parents of Children or Adolescents with Chronic Health Conditions](#)
- [AAP Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [AAP Preparing Child Care Programs for Pandemic and Seasonal Influenza](#)
- [AAP Preventing the Flu: Resources for Parents and Child Care Providers](#)
- [AAP Why Should my Son Get the Flu Shot at the Pediatrician's Office vs. a Retail-based Pharmacy?](#)
- [AAP Is it Safe for a Baby to Get the Flu Vaccine in March and April, and then Get the Next Season's Flu Vaccine in August?](#)
- [CDC Ready Wrigley Prepares for Flu Season](#)
- [Families Fighting Flu Web Site](#)
- [Prevent Childhood Influenza Web Site](#)