

American Academy of Pediatrics “What’s the Latest with the Flu?” Message for Child Care Providers

Get Vaccinated for Seasonal Flu Now!

[Flu](#) activity is quite elevated in the US. Getting vaccinated is still the single best way to protect against influenza and reduce the risk of becoming sick from it. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older, including all child care staff. It is recommended that everyone get vaccinated NOW if you have not already had the vaccine this season. Because young children pass on infections to others in the community, vaccination of every person in a child care setting is an incredibly valuable step in protecting the public’s health.

Prevent the Spread of Germs

With flu activity increasing during the winter months, as it does every year, the challenge is to keep these flu germs from spreading. Staff members and children should be taught to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they [cough or sneeze](#) (and then put the tissue in the trash right away) or cough/sneeze into their elbow or upper arm.

Everyone should be encouraged to [wash their hands](#) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Consider displaying [educational materials](#) in Head Start or early education and child care programs to encourage proper hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette. “[The Flu: A Guide for Parents](#)”, “[Everyday Preventive Actions that can Help Fight Germs, Like Flu](#)”, and “[Teaching Children About the Flu](#)” are examples of free materials available on the [CDC Print Materials](#) Web page.

If You Get the Flu, Antiviral Drugs May Be an Option

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that are used to treat the flu. They can shorten a person’s flu illness, make it milder, and can prevent serious complications. Antivirals can be given anytime during the illness, but they work best when started during the first 2 days. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu, especially those who are at high risk of serious flu complications, are very sick, or are hospitalized. Antivirals can be given to children and pregnant women.

Ready Wrigley and Preparedness for Flu Season

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a [Ready Wrigley Activity Booklet](#) on [influenza](#). This book includes tips, activities, and stories to help families prepare for influenza. The book is designed for children 2 to 8 years of age. The *Ready Wrigley* Activity Book series is produced by the CDC Children’s Preparedness Unit and CDC communication specialists. Child care professionals can print copies of the book for their center or share a link to the book with families.

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

This [AAP manual](#) provides child care directors, teachers, 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.

Archived Webinar

In January 2018, the AAP collaborated with CDC to conduct a webinar titled, “[Preparing Head Start/Child Care and Communities for Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza.](#)” By watching this archived webinar, the

viewer can learn about the recommendations for this flu season and find out why everyone who works in Head Start and child care programs should get the vaccine each year. The webinar also shares strategies to prevent and control the spread of influenza in child care settings and explores ways to prepare for an unlikely but dangerous flu pandemic. The webinar is available [here](#).

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 Flu Information – Free Print Materials](#)
- [CDC Ready Wrigley Prepares for Flu Season](#)
- [Families Fighting Flu Web Site](#)
- [Prevent Childhood Influenza Web Site](#)