

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

2016-2017 Influenza Season

[Flu](#) activity is elevated in the United States, as is expected at this time of year. The single best way to protect against influenza and reduce the risk of becoming sick from it is to get vaccinated. Influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older, including child care staff. It is recommended that everyone get vaccinated NOW, if you have not already received it this season. Vaccination of every person in a child care setting is an incredibly valuable step in protecting the public’s health.

Misconceptions about the Flu Vaccine

A number of misconceptions about the flu vaccine have emerged over the years, causing some to avoid vaccination. Below you will find important information to clear up these mistaken ideas.

- While some people may experience mild side effects within a day of receiving the influenza vaccine, it never causes the flu.
- How well the flu vaccine works may change from year-to-year, but in general, the vaccine cuts the risk of flu illness and flu hospitalizations by at least half. Every year, flu vaccines prevent millions of illnesses and hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations.
- This year, the flu vaccine is a very good match with the exact influenza viruses circulating in communities.
- Flu vaccines are safe for pregnant women. A flu vaccine can protect a pregnant woman from flu AND protect her baby for several months after birth.
- It takes 2 weeks for flu vaccine protection to begin, so it is important to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

See the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fact sheet “[No More Excuses: You Need a Flu Vaccine](#)” for more information.

Prevent the Spread of Germs

With flu activity increasing during the winter months, the challenge is to keep germs from spreading. Staff members and children should be taught to cough into their elbows or cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they [cough or sneeze](#) (and put the tissue in the trash right away). After coughing or sneezing, 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.

Free Online Training Course: Influenza Prevention and Control in Early Education and Child Care

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated its free online course, “[Influenza Prevention and Control - Strategies for Early Education and Childcare 2016-2017](#)”. The course educates staff who work in Head Start and other early education and child care programs about influenza policies and strategies that help keep children healthy. Upon completion of the course, learners will be able to recognize the symptoms of influenza, explain how influenza is spread, discuss the importance of annual seasonal influenza immunization with parents and peers, and much more. This course is approved for 1.0 contact hour.

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

This recently updated [AAP manual](#) provides child care center directors, teachers, and caregivers with important information about the prevention and management of infectious diseases in group care settings. The manual contains helpful guides, including quick reference sheets on prevention of infectious diseases. Detailed chapters address infection control measures, immunizations, and inclusion/exclusion criteria.

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 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?](#)

[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?](#)

[CDC Flu Information – Free Print Materials](#)

[Families Fighting Flu Web Site](#)

[Office of Head Start, Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual: 2015 Edition](#)

- Public Health Emergencies Chapter on Page 27
- Influenza Prevention and Control Appendix on Page 65

[National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, Prevent Childhood Influenza Web Site](#)