

AAP Issues Flu Vaccine Recommendations for 2018-2019

9/3/2018

All children should receive the flu shot as soon as it is available: AAP

ITASCA, IL. – The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that all children ages 6 months and older receive a flu shot this season with the goal to provide the optimal protection against all strains of influenza, a serious illness resulting in a record number of pediatric deaths during this past year.

The annual flu vaccine significantly reduces a child's risk of severe influenza and death, according to the AAP policy statement, "[Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2018-2019](#)." "The flu virus is common – and unpredictable. It can cause serious complications even in healthy children," said Flor M. Munoz, MD, FAAP, member of the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases. "Being immunized reduces the risk of a child being hospitalized due to flu."

The 2017-2018 flu season became one of the most severe seasons on record, excluding pandemics, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This season, the AAP recommends that pediatricians offer the injectable form of the vaccine to all children 6 months and older as soon as it becomes available, preferably by the end of October. The AAP recommends the injectable flu vaccine as the primary choice for children because it has provided the most consistent protection against all strains of the flu virus in recent years.

Since the nasal spray did not work as well against influenza A/H1N1 strain during the 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 flu seasons, it was not recommended in the U.S. for the past two flu seasons. Vaccine effectiveness can vary from one flu season to the next. The effectiveness of the latest nasal spray vaccine for this upcoming season is more of an unknown against the influenza A/H1N1 strain.

Therefore, AAP recommends the flu shot as the first choice for children. The nasal spray vaccine may be used this year for children who would not otherwise receive the flu shot, as long as they are 2 years of age or older and healthy without an underlying medical condition. For instance, if a child refuses the flu shot, or if the physician's office runs out of the injected vaccine, the nasal spray would be appropriate.