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## **MDHHS reports first influenza-associated pediatric death in Michigan this season**

*Michigan residents ages six months and older eligible for flu vaccine*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has confirmed the first influenza-associated pediatric death in Michigan for the 2021-2022 flu season.

The reported death involves a child from Kalamazoo County who contracted Influenza A/H3. Nationally, there have been at least 16 influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported during the current flu season.

“Flu vaccine is a recommended childhood vaccine, and it is important to ensure that children are up to date with all of their vaccines,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive for MDHHS. “Once children reach six months of age it is recommended they receive two doses of the flu vaccine for their first series. In addition, pregnant women should get the flu vaccine during each pregnancy. Flu vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Each year, influenza claims the lives of children across the United States. Increases in flu-like illness and hospitalizations are currently taking place in Michigan, which is not typical for this time of the year. MDHHS continues to strongly recommend that everyone six months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine. If you haven’t received your flu vaccine yet, there is still time to receive it. Flu can be serious and lead to severe illness and hospitalizations. Flu vaccine is the best way to prevent getting the flu and can also reduce the severity of flu illness.

There has been elevated flu activity across the country over the past few weeks, with Influenza A being the main flu type circulating. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that since October there have been at least 3.8 million flu illnesses, 1.8 million flu medical visits, 38,000 flu hospitalizations and 2,300 deaths from flu nationally.

Nearly all of the positive influenza specimens confirmed by MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories this flu season have been Influenza A/H3 virus. This virus can cause severe flu infections in children, as well as in adults.

The influenza vaccine is especially important for persons at increased risk for complications from flu, including children, adults aged 65 years and older, persons of any age with underlying medical conditions and pregnant women. Children less than six

months of age are too young to be vaccinated and need to be protected by vaccination of their close contacts, including parents, siblings, grandparents, childcare workers and health care personnel.

Currently, for the 2021-2022 flu season, only 32% of Michigan residents have been vaccinated against flu. According to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry, flu vaccine coverage among children ages six months through 17 years is 5.4% lower for the 2021-2022 flu season (25.8%) compared to the 2020-2021 flu season (31.2%).

There is still plenty of flu vaccine available for those who wish to be vaccinated. To find flu vaccine near you, call your health care provider, local health department or check the [Health Map Vaccine Finder](#).

For more information about the flu, visit [Michigan.gov/flu](https://www.michigan.gov/flu).

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