

Flu activity slows down, but season far from over: CDC

January 15 2024, by Robin Foster



Following weeks of increases in flu activity, the latest U.S. government [data](#) shows "a single-week decrease" for the first time in months.

But [health officials](#) warn that the [flu season](#) is far from over, with a surge expected shortly.

"Folks try not to seek care during the [holiday season](#), so we see these divots in the surveillance graphs each year, but it is very probable that during the next weeks, we'll see an upsurge of cases," [Dr. Eduardo Azziz-Baumgartner](#), of the CDC's Influenza Division, told *CBS News*.

Another expert concurred.

"Just because we've seen cases go down a little bit in the last week doesn't mean we don't still have another bump in cases yet to come," said [Dr. Céline Gounder](#), a *CBS News* medical contributor and editor-at-large for [public health](#) at KFF Health News. "Later in January, February is very often the peak of the influenza season, so just because we've seen a recent drop in flu cases doesn't mean that there aren't more to come."

So far this season, the flu has caused at least 14 million illnesses, 150,000 hospitalizations and 9,400 deaths, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An additional 13 pediatric deaths were reported this week, bringing the total number to 40 for the season.

The increase in deaths among kids is worrying, Gounder noted.

"Unfortunately, I think a lot of people coming out of the COVID pandemic are fatigued and tired of talking about vaccinations, getting vaccinated, but kids under 5 are very much at risk for hospitalization and even death from [respiratory illnesses](#), including influenza, COVID and RSV, and this is because they have less mature immune systems and smaller airways," she explained.

So while death from respiratory illnesses is still relatively rare among [young children](#), "it's really important to keep up to date with vaccinations in those youngest," as it can "dramatically reduce the risk of these terrible consequences."

Azziz-Baumgartner noted that the flu vaccine helps anyone looking for protection.

"Anyone who hasn't gotten vaccinated against influenza should go get their vaccines so that they're protected," he said.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on the [flu](#).

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