

Over half a million U.S. kids already infected with COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—More than 500,000 U.S. children had been diagnosed

with COVID-19 as of early September, with a sizable uptick seen in recent weeks, a new report reveals.

There were 70,630 new child cases reported between Aug. 20 and Sept. 3, 2020. That brings the total to 513,415 cases—a 16% increase over two weeks, according to state-by-state data compiled by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Children's Hospital Association.

"These numbers are a chilling reminder of why we need to take this virus seriously," said AAP president Dr. Sara Goza.

As of Sept. 3, [children](#) accounted for nearly 10% of all reported COVID-19 cases in the United States since the start of the pandemic, according to the latest weekly report from the two organizations.

The findings highlight the need to redouble efforts to curb the spread of the new [coronavirus](#), the experts said. The virus has surged in Southern, Western and Midwestern states during the summer, they pointed out.

"While much remains unknown about COVID-19, we do know that the spread among children reflects what is happening in the broader communities," Goza said in an AAP news release.

"A disproportionate number of cases are reported in Black and Hispanic children, and in places where there is high poverty. We must work harder to address societal inequities that contribute to these disparities," she added.

Dr. Sean O'Leary is vice chair of the academy's committee on infectious diseases. "This rapid rise in positive cases occurred over the summer, and as the weather cools, we know people will spend more time indoors," he said.

"The goal is to get children back into schools for in-person learning, but in many communities, this is not possible as the virus spreads unchecked," O'Leary added.

With [flu season](#) approaching, it's important to "take this seriously and implement the [public health measures](#) we know can help," he said. That includes wearing masks, avoiding large crowds, maintaining social distance and getting a flu shot.

"These measures will help protect everyone, including children," O'Leary said.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [COVID-19](#).

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