

AAP's Updated Immunization Recommendations for Respiratory Virus Season 2026-2027

Key messages and resources

Below please find a summary of RSV, influenza and COVID-19 pediatric immunization guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, along with key messages for public communication and other resources. For vaccine recommendations for other populations, including adults, and for additional resources, please visit www.spreadthefacts.org, a resource developed by the American Medical Association in partnership with medical societies. An evidence review supporting the guidance, prepared by the Vaccine Integrity Project, is available [here](#).

RSV:

Summary of AAP Guidance:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends RSV immunization for all infants under 8 months of age born during or entering their first RSV season, unless the infant has documented protection from vaccination of their pregnant parent. Children ages 8-19 months with certain health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe disease should receive an RSV shot entering their second RSV season as well.
- For more information, please see the [RSV policy statement published in Pediatrics](#), the accompanying [technical report](#) and [AAP's press release](#).

Key Messages for Parents:

- Cough, congestion, runny nose: All common for kids from October to March. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) spreads like a cold and often looks like a regular cold in school-age children, causing symptoms like a runny nose and cough. However, babies who get RSV can get much sicker than older kids because their lungs and airways are so tiny. The virus causes airways to swell and fill with mucus, making it difficult for babies to breathe.
- RSV is the number one reason babies end up in the hospital before their first birthday. Seeing an infant struggle to breathe is hard to watch. Immunizations for pregnant moms or infants give babies a strong start. Talk with your pediatrician about RSV immunization to learn more.
- If you are pregnant now, you can give your baby's immune system a head start by getting the RSV vaccine late in your pregnancy to pass along important antibodies. Or your baby can get the RSV shot soon after they are born. Either way, you're helping your baby resist RSV.
- The shot for babies works a little differently than a traditional vaccine. It provides antibodies that start working to protect babies right away. The protection lasts throughout a typical RSV season.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends RSV immunization for all infants under 8 months of age born during or entering their first RSV season, unless the infant has documented protection from vaccination of their pregnant parent. Children ages 8-19 months with certain health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe disease should receive an RSV shot entering their second RSV season as well.

Resources:

- [Discussion guide](#) (for clinicians)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) Prevention](#) (for clinicians)
- [RSV Immunization Visual Administration Guide](#) (for clinicians)

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- [RSV \(Respiratory Syncytial Virus\) Campaign Toolkit](#)
- [RSV: When it's More Than Just a Cold](#)
- [RSV Immunizations: Two Ways to Protect Babies](#)

INFLUENZA:

Summary of AAP Guidance:

- All children ages 6 months and older should receive an annual flu vaccine. Two doses may be indicated for some children.
- For more information, please see the influenza [policy statement published in Pediatrics](#) and the accompanying [technical report](#) and [AAP's press release](#).

Key Messages:

- Influenza (or the flu) is a viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs. It spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes and another person breathes in the virus, or when someone touches a contaminated surface then puts a finger in their mouth or nose.
- Flu is much more serious than a bad cold. Most people who get the flu are sick at home for about a week, but some end up in the hospital. The flu can be serious, especially for young children or those with conditions like asthma or diabetes.
- Keeping your child up to date on flu shots helps their immune system stay ahead of those germs so they can remain healthy and grow strong. Flu viruses change over time, and different strains circulate each year. The flu vaccine is updated every year to keep up with these changes. That's why kids (and adults) need a new flu shot every year.
- Flu season starts in the fall, just as kids return to school. Make sure your back-to-school to-do list includes a trip to your pediatrician to bring your child up to date on immunizations. Getting a flu shot before the end of October means your child's immune system can learn to resist the virus before it hits your community.
- On-time immunization keeps our kids, their classmates, and our communities healthier. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all children 6 months and older receive a flu vaccine. If you have questions, talk with your pediatrician.

Resources:

- [Flu discussion guide](#) (for clinicians)
- [Influenza Patient Care](#) (for clinicians)
- [Flu Toolkit](#)
- [The Flu Vaccine Reduces the Risk of Serious Illness in Children \(Spanish\)](#)
- [The Flu: What Parents Need to Know](#)
- [Which Flu Vaccine Should Children Get?](#)

COVID-19:

Summary of AAP Guidance:

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- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the COVID-19 vaccine for all kids age 6 months through 23 months. Age 2 and beyond, AAP recommends vaccination for children and teens at higher risk of severe disease, or if vaccination is desired.
- For more information, please see the [COVID-19 policy statement published in Pediatrics](#) and the accompanying [technical report](#).

Key Messages:

- COVID-19 is still around and still causing illness in some people. Respiratory illnesses can be especially risky for infants and toddlers, whose airways and lungs are small and still developing.
- That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the COVID vaccine for all children age 6 months through 23 months. Beyond age 2, AAP recommends shots for children and teens with health conditions that would make a case of COVID risky. AAP also recommends that any child whose parents want them to get a COVID shot should have easy, free access to this vaccine.
- COVID vaccines are updated annually to work best against strains of the virus that are currently circulating. The vaccine teaches your child's immune system to recognize and resist the virus strains, so they can stay healthy.
- Information spreads fast, but not all of it is true. When it comes to the COVID vaccine, false or confusing information can harm your child's health. Trustworthy information from medical experts relies on science, not rumors. Check the source before you accept or share anything and talk with your pediatrician if you have questions or concerns about the COVID vaccine.

Resources:

- [Discussion guide](#) (for clinicians)
- [AAP Pediatric COVID Vaccine Dosing Quick Reference Guide](#) (for clinicians)
- [COVID-19 Patient Care](#) (for clinicians)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign Toolkit](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines Prevent Serious Illness in Young Children](#)
- [COVID-19: What Families Need to Know](#)
- [When Should Kids Get the COVID Vaccine?](#)
- [The Science Behind COVID Vaccines: Parent FAQ](#)