**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**

**What’s the Latest with the Flu?**

**December 2014**

**Flu activity** <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/summary.htm> is increasing in the United States. Five pediatric deaths have been reported so far this season, with influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B viruses being identified most commonly in the United States. The CDC has reported that 52% of the influenza A (H3N2) viruses collected and analyzed in the United States from October 1 through November 22, 2014 were antigenically different (drifted) from the H3N2 virus strain in the vaccine. When predominant circulating influenza viruses drift, there is the potential for decreased vaccine effectiveness against that drifted strain. This finding highlights the importance of influenza antiviral treatment as a valuable second line of defense for children with influenza. For more information, see the **CDC HAN Health Alert Network** <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00374.asp> message and the **AAP Latest News article** <http://aapnews.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/12/05/aapnews.20141205-1>.

**National Influenza Vaccination Week** <http://www2.aap.org/immunization/about/nivw.html> (NIVW) is taking place December 7-13, 2014. Vaccination remains the most important step in protecting against influenza. With flu activity increasing and family and friends gathering for the holidays, now is a great time to get your flu vaccine to protect yourself and your loved ones. As a reminder, it takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to develop full protective immunity.

**New data** <http://aapnews.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/11/06/aapnews.20141106-1> show that the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) was not effective against the influenza A H1N1 pandemic virus when compared with inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) in children 2 through 8 years of age. This data is contrary to earlier studies suggesting that LAIV has superior efficacy in children ages 2 years through 8 years. This, however, does not change the AAP’s recommendation that all children 6 months and older, who are eligible for influenza vaccination, should be immunized against influenza as soon as possible. Remember that 80% of all influenza illness generally occurs in January, February, and March each year.

Also, be sure to check out the new **2014-2015 AAP Online Flu Courses** <http://pedialink.aap.org/visitor> “Influenza Office Testing and Vaccinating Egg-Allergic Children” and “Prevention and Control of Influenza: 2014-2015”. These courses deliver valuable information for clinicians to help keep children healthy during this flu season. Each online course brings you up to date in less than an hour and qualifies for *American Medical Association (AMA) Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) Category 1 Credit(s)TM*.

For more detailed influenza information, see the **AAP Red Book Online Influenza Resource page** <http://redbook.solutions.aap.org/ss/influenza-resources.aspx> or the **CDC FluView** <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>. All What’s the Latest with the Flu messages will be **archived** [www.aap.org/disasters/flu](http://www.aap.org/disasters/flu).