



Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Eric Friedlander
SECRETARY

275 East Main Street, 5W-A
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
Phone: (502) 564-7042
Fax: (502) 564-7091

Statewide Press Release

Contact:

Susan Dunlap
502-226-0245
Susan.Dunlap@ky.gov

Brice Mitchell
502-330-9912
Brice.Mitchell@ky.gov

Kentucky Reports First COVID-19 and Influenza Deaths Among Children This Winter

Vaccinations against both illnesses remain important

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 11, 2024) – Today, state health officials with the Kentucky Department for Public Health announced that two children in Kentucky recently died from respiratory viruses. One child died from influenza and the other from COVID-19. Neither child had been immunized against the virus that caused their illness.

“Influenza and COVID-19 are serious illnesses that unfortunately can be deadly for some people, including young children,” said **Dr. Steven Stack**, commissioner of the Department for Public Health. “It is important for people who have not been vaccinated to get their updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccines this season, along with other recommended immunizations, to protect themselves.”

Respiratory illnesses, including influenza, COVID-19 and RSV, are widespread across Kentucky and have been elevated above baseline levels for the fifth consecutive week. The most current data on respiratory virus activity in Kentucky is available [online](#).

Though most influenza and COVID-19 infections result in mild illness, serious symptoms, such as difficulty or fast breathing, seizures, bluish lips or face, high fever (above 104°F), fever or cough that improves but then comes back or gets worse, dehydration (e.g., reduced urine output, dry mouth, no tears when crying) or worsening of other medical conditions, may require medical attention. Antiviral treatment of influenza and COVID-19 are also recommended for some individuals to reduce the severity of illness.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months old and older get the annual flu and COVID-19 vaccines, especially children younger than 5 or anyone at [high-risk for complications](#).

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are widely available in health care provider offices and pharmacies. Vaccination can be given any time during the flu season, and the flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same time. Most individuals can receive COVID-19 and flu vaccines for free. To find a flu or COVID-19 vaccine, visit [vaccines.gov](#).

Health officials also encourage good health habits to prevent transmission of flu and other respiratory illnesses. These include washing hands often with soap and warm water, covering coughs and sneezes and staying at home from work or school when sick.

###

TEAM
KENTUCKY™



For more information about the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, visit <https://www.chfs.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

For more information about the Department for Public Health, visit <https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/Pages/default.aspx>.