

## Most Parents Unaware of New CDC Flu Vaccination Guidelines for Children

(ARA) - From costumes to candy, a parent's to-do list may be the scariest thing about October - but getting your children vaccinated against the flu is one to-do that many parents may not realize is a must-do.

In fact, an overwhelming majority - 84 percent - of parents are unaware of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) new influenza vaccination recommendation for healthy children, according to a recent survey conducted by Families Fighting Flu, a non-profit organization of parents who have lost children to the flu. The vaccine protects against 3 strains of influenza that are anticipated to circulate in the US during the 2006-2007 flu season.



This flu season, for the first time, the CDC recommends all healthy children 6 months to 5 years old get vaccinated against the flu. This is an expansion from previous CDC recommendations of children 2 years old and younger.

"Children are two to three times more likely to develop the flu than adults, because their immune systems are not yet fully developed," said Richard Kanowitz, president of Families Fighting Flu. "That is why it is so important that parents educate themselves about flu prevention, and take the steps needed to help protect their children from the flu virus."

### *Flu symptoms*

Influenza, or "the flu," is an easy-to-spread viral infection. The symptoms include high fever, chills, cough, aches and fatigue. A simple cough or sneeze can spread the flu virus from person to person. The flu virus can live on household surfaces too and can spread when a person touches a surface, like a toy, with the virus on it then touches their mouth or nose.

### *Prevention tips*

Flu season usually occurs from November to March, so it is important to get your family vaccinated in October and November -- before flu season peaks -- for vaccinations to be most effective.

Once your child is vaccinated, it is still important to take the following steps to help prevent the spread of the flu virus at home and beyond:

- **Sing & Scrub:** Make sure kids wash their hands the right way. They should wash frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).
- **Do the Elbow Cough:** Teach kids to cough into elbows, not hands where they're more likely to spread bacteria and viruses through touch.
- **Disinfect Hot Spots:** Kids can touch up to 300 surfaces in 30 minutes, so be sure to disinfect the surfaces kids touch most frequently - like doorknobs, light switches, faucets or toys. Use a disinfectant approved to kill cold and flu viruses.

For more information on the flu and helping to prevent the spread of the virus, contact your child's pediatrician or go to [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/).