

UW Health: Encourages early pediatric influenza vaccines

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MADISON, Wis. – As children return to school in different ways this year, UW Health wants the public to know it is still vitally important for all children age 6 months to 17 years old (and their parents & grandparents) to be protected from influenza as soon as possible.

Despite the increased physical distancing and the ongoing virtual learning, children are still vulnerable to influenza and contracting it can have serious health consequences. As we continue to deal with this pandemic, it is important to protect our health and wellness in any way we can. We do not yet have a proven COVID-19 vaccine, but we know that the influenza vaccines are proven to prevent infection, lessen the severity of the virus, and reduce hospitalizations and mortality.

“We are encouraging parents to schedule their child’s influenza vaccine visit as soon as possible, ideally before the end of October, to provide the best and earliest protection,” said James Conway, MD, pediatrician, Immunization Program medical director at UW Health.

Last year was a particularly severe influenza season. As of February 23, 2020, UW Health saw 821 cases of pediatric influenza for the 2019-2020 flu season. This is compared to the 2018-2019 season when UW Health had only confirmed 76 pediatric influenza cases within the same timeframe.

UW Health patients can visit uwhealth.org/flu for more information.

Video and interviews with Dr. Conway are available.