

Flu Becomes National Epidemic, Killing 15 Children

Flu season is in full swing and reaching epidemic levels nationwide.

More than 20 states are reporting widespread cases and at least 15 children have died.

That's a significant jump from last year when some of those states saw no reports of child deaths.

"Already this season in Minnesota we've had three reported pediatric deaths compared to zero last year," the Mayo Clinic's Dr. Pritish Tosh told reporters.

Still, those hardest hit are adults over 65. Some doctors say this season's vaccine is not well matched to the predominant circulating strain of flu.

"It's really ferocious at the present time and some people say it's the worst that they can remember," Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Hospital, said of the bug.

The strength of this year's flu bug makes it even more important for people to wash their hands frequently, stay home when they're sick, and cover their mouths and noses when sneezing or coughing.