

What Parents Need to Know about Enterovirus D68

Every year, millions of children in the United States catch enteroviruses that can cause coughing, sneezing, and fever. This year, the enterovirus that is most commonly causing respiratory illness in children across the country is enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68). Parents should learn more about EV-D68 so that they can help keep their children from getting and spreading the virus.

Infections with enteroviruses are usually common in the United States during summer and fall. This year, beginning in mid-August, states started seeing more children in hospitals with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68. Since then, CDC and states have been doing more testing, and have found that EV-D68 is making people sick in almost all states. Most of the cases have been among children. EV-D68 is not new, but it hasn't been as common in the past. While this has been a big year for EV-D68 infections, CDC expects the number of cases to taper off by late fall.

Children with asthma are particularly at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68 infection.

Children are at higher risk for EV-D68

Infants, children, and teenagers are at higher risk than adults for getting infected and sick with enteroviruses like EV-D68. That's because they have not been exposed to these types of viruses before, and they do not yet have immunity (protection) built up to fight the disease. If your child has asthma, he or she may be at greater risk for severe respiratory illness from EV-D68.

Know the signs of symptoms of EV-D68

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness.

Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, and body and muscle aches.

Severe symptoms may include wheezing and difficulty breathing. Call your child's doctor if he or she is having difficulty breathing, if you feel you are unable to control their symptoms, or if

symptoms are getting worse. If your child develops severe illness, he or she may need to be hospitalized.

Help protect your family from EV-D68

To help avoid getting and spreading EV-D68, parents and children should always follow basic steps to stay healthy.

Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Washing hands correctly is the most important thing you can do to stay healthy.

Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils, with people who are sick.

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not your hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children out of school.

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Division of Viral Diseases

EV-D68 treatment

There is no specific treatment for EV-D68. Talk to your child's doctor about the best way to control his or her symptoms.

If your child has asthma

Children with asthma are particularly at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68 and other respiratory infections. Therefore, if your child has asthma, take some steps to prepare in case he or she catches EV-D68. CDC recommends you do the following to help maintain control of your child's asthma during this time:

- Discuss and update your child's asthma action plan with his or her doctor.

- Make sure your child takes his or her prescribed asthma medications as directed, especially long-term control medication(s).

- Make sure your child knows to keep asthma reliever medication with him or her or has access to it at all times.

- Get your child a flu vaccine, since flu can trigger an asthma attack. (Children with a history of wheezing in the past 12 months should not receive the flu nasal spray vaccine.)

- If your child develops new or worsening asthma symptoms, follow the steps of his or her asthma action plan. If symptoms do not go away, call your child's doctor right away.

- Make sure caregiver(s) and/or teacher(s) are aware of the child's condition, and that they know how to help if the child experiences any symptoms related to asthma.

- Call your child's doctor if he or she is having difficulty breathing, if you feel you are unable to control their symptoms, or if symptoms are getting worse.

More Information

Read more about Enterovirus D68. <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polioenterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>

Learn about Enterovirus D68 in the United States, 2014 and what CDC is doing about it. <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/outbreaks/EV-D68-outbreaks.html>

Print an infographic on how to prevent the spread of Enterovirus D68. <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html>

See CDC Asthma for information about asthma and how to protect your child. <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/default.htm>