

Parents: Learn the Facts about Enterovirus D68



Every year, millions of children in the United States get enterovirus infections that can cause coughing, sneezing, and fever. This year, children throughout the country have gotten sick with respiratory illnesses caused by enterovirus D-68 (EV-D68). EV-D68 is one of many enteroviruses that often spread in the summer and fall. It's not a new virus, but it hasn't been very common in the past. However, this year, EV-D68 is the most common enterovirus that's going around.

Since you may not have heard of EV-D68 before, better understanding of how to prevent the virus and the symptoms that this virus can cause can help you protect your children.

What are the signs and symptoms of EV-D68?

Most children who get infected with EV-D68 may have cold-like symptoms, like fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, and body and muscle aches. More severe symptoms include wheezing and difficulty breathing. Children with asthma are at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68.

How can I protect my children?

You can help protect yourself and others from respiratory illnesses, including EV-D68, by following these steps:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds
- 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, or when you 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 home from school

Could my child get EV-D68?

EV-D68 spreads when people infected with the virus cough, sneeze, or touch surfaces that are then touched by others. In general, 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.

If your child has asthma, 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 your child's doctor (usually pulmonologist or pediatrician).
- Make sure your child takes 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.
- If your child develops new or worsening asthma symptoms, follow the steps in his or her asthma action plan. If your 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 he or she 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 symptoms, or if symptoms are getting worse.

Summary

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

Remember, that while this has been a big year for EV-D68 infections, CDC expects the number of cases to taper off by late fall. But even after cases of EV-D68 begin to decrease, parents and children should continue to follow basic steps to stay healthy, such as frequent hand washing and avoiding touching their faces with unwashed hands. To help your family stay healthy this fall and winter, CDC recommends that everyone age 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccine.

For more information on EV-D68, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>.