

Get the Facts: Enterovirus D68

There have been several stories in the news about a respiratory illness called enterovirus D68 or EV-D68. EV-D68 has affected children in a number of states in the Midwest, including Illinois. EV-D68 has led to some children being hospitalized. This fact sheet explains some basics about the illness and what you can do to help protect your child.

What are Enteroviruses?

Enteroviruses are a group of viruses which are very common. Most people infected with enteroviruses do not get sick or they have only mild illness like a cold.

- It is estimated that 10 to 15 million people get enterovirus infections in the United States each year – most of which are not serious. In a very few cases, infections can be serious.
- Infants, children and teenagers are most likely to get infected with enteroviruses.
- Most enterovirus infections in the United States occur seasonally during the summer and fall.

What is Enterovirus D68?

There are more than 100 different types of enteroviruses. EV-D68 is one type. It is not the most common type, but there have been a number of recent cases, including some that have led to hospitalizations.

What are the Symptoms?

Many people with an enterovirus will have no symptoms at all. Others will have symptoms like a cold. These symptoms include runny nose, sneezing, coughing and body aches. Less commonly, children may develop difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, which require immediate medical attention.

How do people get EV-D68?

Individuals get EV-D68 just like they get a cold. If you come into contact with a person who is sick, you can catch EV-D68 from them, especially if they cough or sneeze near you or if you touch a contaminated surface. This is why it is important for you to remind your children to wash their hands.

What treatment is available?

There is no specific treatment for EV-D68. In many cases the symptoms of EV-D68 are mild and individuals will make a full recovery in a short amount of time. However, some people who develop difficulty breathing may need to be hospitalized.

How can I prevent the spread of EV-D68?

You and your children can help protect yourselves by following these simple steps:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth if your hands are unwashed.
- Don't kiss, hug or share food or drinks with someone who is sick.
- Be sure to clean frequently-touched surfaces including doorknobs and toys.
- If you are sick, stay home so you don't get other people sick.
- If your child has asthma, be sure they follow their treatment regimens and contact their healthcare provider if there are any problems.

Concerned parents with an ill child should contact their medical provider

September 9, 2014

