

September 2014

Virginia Department of Health: Information for Parents Regarding Enterovirus D68

1. What is enterovirus D68?

Enterovirus D68 (otherwise referred to as EV-D68) is a type of enterovirus. Enteroviruses are very common viruses. There are over 100 types of enteroviruses and approximately 10-15 million enterovirus infections occur each year in the United States. Most enterovirus infections do not cause symptoms of illness or cause only mild symptoms; however, some infections can cause severe illness. EV-D68 is seen less commonly than other types of enterovirus.

2. Why has EV-D68 been mentioned in the media recently?

In August, two hospitals in Missouri and Illinois identified increases in severe respiratory illness among children. Initial testing showed that children were ill with enterovirus and rhinovirus (the common cold). Further testing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified EV-D68 in some of the patient specimens. Several other states are investigating clusters of children with severe respiratory illness, possibly due to EV-D68.

3. What type of illness does EV-D68 cause in persons infected?

EV-D68 has been reported to cause mild to severe respiratory illness. Signs and symptoms recently reported among those infected include coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing and severe asthma symptoms. Fever has been reported in only approximately 25% of those with EV-D68 infections. More information is being learned about the range of illness, including if there are groups who might be at higher risk for developing serious illness.

4. Has EV-D68 been identified in Virginia yet?

At this time, EV-D68 has not yet been identified in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Health is investigating reported clusters and is continuing to monitor for increases in respiratory illnesses at healthcare facilities statewide.

5. What should I do if I think my child has been infected with EV-D68?

There are many germs that cause respiratory illness among children, including flu and those that cause the common cold. Respiratory infections range from mild to severe illness. If your child has difficulty breathing, take your child to the doctor for immediate medical evaluation. If you have concerns about other respiratory symptoms, please contact your child's doctor. Keep sick children at home and limit contact with others to prevent spreading the virus.

6. Will I be able to have my child tested for EV-D68?

Laboratory testing for enterovirus is available; however very few laboratories in the U.S. are able to identify EV-D68. The Virginia Department of Health is prioritizing public health testing for EV-D68 for situations involving multiple ill patients with severe respiratory illness who require care at hospitals. For these situations, the state public health laboratory and CDC will assist with testing. Testing of the most severely ill will help identify EV-D68 in Virginia and will provide public health officials more information about this type of enterovirus. For testing individuals with less severe respiratory illness, your child's pediatrician may consider testing at commercial laboratories. Commercial laboratory tests can identify enterovirus, but not specific types of enterovirus, such as EV-D68.

7. How are EV-D68 infections treated?

Many EV-D68 infections will be mild and will resolve on their own or with over-the-counter medicines for the symptoms. Some people with severe EV-D68 infections might need to be hospitalized to receive intense supportive treatment. Currently, there are no specific anti-viral medications available to treat EV-D68 infections. No vaccine is available for preventing EV-D68 infections.

8. What is the best way to prevent EV-D68 infections among my family?

Good respiratory hygiene will limit the spread of respiratory infections, including those caused by EV-D68. Consider the following recommendations to prevent infection with respiratory viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. This will block the spread of droplets from your mouth or nose that could contain germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Be aware that alcohol-based hand rubs are able to protect against many respiratory pathogens; however, they are not effective against enteroviruses, including EV-D68.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- If you or your child gets sick with a respiratory illness, limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading illness. Stay home (or keep your child home) for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine before a child returns to school. If you or your child is coughing severely but does not have a fever, please stay home until the cough has subsided.
- If you or your child is asthmatic, ensure your/their controller and rescue medicines are up-to-date and available as needed. Also ensure that your child's school or daycare has his/her asthma controller medications available.
- Flu season is approaching and the best protection from infection is receiving influenza vaccine. Flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Flu vaccine is especially important for those with chronic medical conditions,

healthcare workers, and caregivers of infants under 6 months of age. Pregnant women should receive an annual flu shot during pregnancy to protect both themselves and their babies.

9. How can I get more information about EV-D68?

- If you have concerns about EV-D68 infections, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/LHD/index.htm>
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>