

ENTEROVIRUS

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

What is enterovirus?

- Enteroviruses are very common viruses; there are more than 100 types. They are carried in the intestinal tract and often spread to other parts of the body.
- Most people infected with enteroviruses have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but some infections can be serious.
- Most enterovirus infections in the United States occur seasonally during the summer and fall.
- There are currently clusters of illness in several states associated with a specific type of enterovirus, EV-D68. This particular enterovirus can cause severe respiratory illness in children.

How are enteroviruses spread?

You can get exposed to the virus by—

- drinking water that has the virus in it,
- changing diapers of an infected person,
- having close contact, such as touching or shaking hands, with an infected person, or
- touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them.
- If you then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands, you can get infected with the virus and become sick.

What are the symptoms of EV-D68?

- EV-D68 usually can cause mild to severe respiratory illness, including cold-like symptoms (runny nose and coughing), sometimes accompanied by fever or wheezing. The full spectrum of illness is not well defined.
- Some children may experience the onset of wheezing or asthma exacerbation.
- Children, especially children with asthma, may experience difficulty breathing.

How is the current cluster of EV-D68 infections different from others?

- EV-D68 infections occur less commonly than those with other enteroviruses.
- There are currently a high number of hospitalizations associated with EV-D68.
- Unlike the majority of enteroviruses, EV-D68 infections have been associated almost exclusively with respiratory illness.

How long after infection do symptoms appear?

- Symptoms may occur within 3 to 6 days after being exposed to the virus.
- The virus can be shed from the respiratory tract for 1 to 3 weeks.
- Infected people can shed the virus even if they don't have symptoms.

Who is most at risk?

- Infants, children and teenagers are most likely to get infected with enteroviruses and become sick.

How is EV-D68 diagnosed?

- Enteroviruses are diagnosed by the severity of symptoms along with laboratory tests that characterize the specific enterovirus type.

What type of health problems are caused by EV-D68?

- Many infections will be mild and clear up on their own, requiring only treatment of the symptoms.
- Some cases could, in theory, contribute to death. To date, no current cases have resulted in death.

Enterovirus Information Sheet for Schools and Childcare Facilities

How is EV-D68 treated?

- There is no specific treatment for EV-D68 infections.
- Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy.
- No anti-viral medications are currently available for treating of EV-D68 infections.

How can EV-D68 infections or other enteroviruses be prevented?

- There are no vaccines for preventing EV-D68 infections.
- You can reduce the risk of getting infected with EV-D68 by following these measures:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds; especially after coming into contact with stool. It is important to note that alcohol sanitizers are not effective against EV-D68.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact such as kissing or hugging and sharing cups or eating utensils with sick people.
 - Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
 - Stay home if you feel unwell, especially if you experience symptoms after coming in contact with a sick person.

Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities

- Schools and childcare facilities experiencing unusual amounts of suspected clusters or outbreaks should report these to local or state health departments.
- Children with asthma may be more at risk for severe respiratory illness, and should follow their asthma care plan.
- Influenza vaccination is especially important for children with asthma or other high-risk conditions.
- The Utah Department of Health also recommends that all full- and part-time employees, including teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, and staff, receive influenza vaccination.
- Children who have cold-like symptoms and experience difficulty breathing should be referred to their family physician for further evaluation.
- Currently, there are no specific exclusion policies in place.

Where can I get more information?

For more information regarding students suspected of having EV-D68, contact the Utah Department of Health; Bureau of Epidemiology at 801-538-6191 or your local health department.

For information on where to find influenza vaccine, contact your healthcare provider, local health department, pharmacy or visit the Utah Vaccination Locator at www.immunize-utah.org.

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