

Enterovirus D68

General Information

Enteroviruses are common viruses that generally peak in late summer and early fall and affect mostly children, teens and young adults. Enterovirus infections are not generally life-threatening but can sometimes be severe, especially for children with asthma or other underlying respiratory conditions.

Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is one of many enteroviruses that can cause illness. EV-D68 was first identified in California in 1962, but it has not been commonly reported in the United States. Recently, EV-D68 has been linked to clusters of respiratory illness in several states, including some illnesses that have been severe.

Symptoms

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness.

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

Severe symptoms may include difficulty breathing and wheezing. People with asthma may have a higher risk for severe respiratory illness.

Transmission

EV-D68, like other enteroviruses, spreads through close contact with infected people or by touching objects or surfaces that are contaminated with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for EV-D68 infections.

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 EV-D68 infections.

Prevention

No vaccines are available to prevent EV-D68. Here are some ways to reduce the risk of infection:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging and sharing cups or eating utensils with people that are ill.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces – toys, doorknobs, etc.

What should you do?

- If you or your child(ren) have asthma, take steps to make sure your asthma is under good control. People with asthma are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses.
- Get your flu vaccine. Although flu vaccines won't protect against EV-D68, they can help prevent another important cause of respiratory illness that could be going around at the same time.
- Monitor children, teens and young adults for respiratory symptoms, especially if they have pre-existing conditions. If you or your child is experiencing cold-like symptoms and having difficulty breathing, contact your health care provider right away.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov or epi.publichealth.nc.gov