

Facts About Enterovirus D68



Enterovirus D68 is not new. It was first isolated in 1962 but has been rarely reported since then. Enteroviruses of various types cause about 10 to 15 million infections each year in the U.S., usually in the late summer or early fall. This year's outbreak includes a new type that has been associated with many cases throughout the U.S. causing unusually severe respiratory disease in some children.

What are the symptoms of EV-D68 infection?

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness.

- Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, and body and muscle aches.
- Severe symptoms may include wheezing and difficulty breathing.

Anyone with respiratory illness should contact their doctor if they are having difficulty breathing or if their symptoms are getting worse.

How are enteroviruses spread?

Enteroviruses are spread by close contact with an infected person. You can also become infected by touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

How are enteroviruses treated?

The vast majority of children with enteroviruses such as EV-D68 have mild symptoms and do not need any medical care beyond what is done for the common cold. A number of children with asthma and even some without a prior history of wheezing have had unusually severe cases of EV-D68 resulting in hospitalization; some requiring treatment in the intensive care unit.

Children with high fever and those with cold symptoms lasting longer than 7-10 days should talk with their pediatrician. Those with difficulty breathing should seek emergency care.

Important information for children with asthma:

Children with asthma are at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68 and other respiratory illnesses. CDC recommends:

- Discuss and update your asthma action plan with your primary care provider.
- Take your prescribed asthma medications as directed, especially long term control medication(s).
- Be sure to keep your reliever medication with you.
- Get a flu vaccine when available.
- If you develop new or worsening asthma symptoms, follow the steps of your asthma action plan. If your symptoms do not go away, call your doctor right away.
- Parents should make sure the child's caregiver and/or teacher is aware of his/her condition, and that they know how to help if the child experiences any symptoms related to asthma.

How to reduce the risk of infection with enteroviruses:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching, eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick, and consult with your health care provider.

For more information on Enterovirus D68 and other infectious diseases, please visit StoptheSpreadAZ.org.