

Enterovirus D68: EV-D68 Facts for Schools

Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is one of many non-polio enteroviruses. Enterovirus D68 infections are thought to occur less commonly than infections with other enteroviruses. Compared with other enteroviruses, EV-D68 has been rarely reported in the United States for the last 40 years.

Hospitals in Missouri and Illinois are seeing more children than usual with severe respiratory illness caused by enterovirus D68. Several other states are investigating clusters of children with severe respiratory illness, possibly due to enterovirus D68. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is watching this situation closely and assisting states with testing of specimens.

Non-polio enteroviruses are very common viruses. They cause about 10 to 15 million infections in the United States each year. Anyone can become infected with non-polio enteroviruses. Infants, children, and teenagers are more likely to become infected and get sick, because they do not yet have immunity (protection) from previous exposures to the viruses. Infants and people with weakened immune systems have a greater chance of developing complications.

You can become infected with non-polio enteroviruses by having 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.

Symptoms

Most people who are infected with non-polio enteroviruses do not get sick, or they only have mild illness. Symptoms of mild illness may include:

- fever
- runny nose, sneezing, cough
- skin rash
- mouth blisters
- body and muscle aches

Some non-polio enterovirus infections can cause:

- viral conjunctivitis
- hand, foot, and mouth disease
- viral meningitis (infection of the covering of the spinal cord and/or brain)

Less commonly, a person may develop:

- myocarditis (infection of the heart)
- pericarditis (infection of the sac around the heart)
- encephalitis (infection of the brain)
- paralysis

You should see your health care provider if experiencing new onset of wheezing or an increase in asthma symptoms.

Prevention and Treatment

There is no vaccine to protect you from non-polio enterovirus infection. Since many infected people do not have symptoms, it is difficult to prevent non-polio enteroviruses from spreading.

You can help protect yourself and others from infections by:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers
- Avoiding close contact, such as touching and shaking hands, with people who are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces with standard disinfectants
- Keeping children home from school or day care when they are sick
- Ensuring optimal control of asthma

There is no specific treatment for non-polio enterovirus infection. People with mild illness caused by non-polio enterovirus infection typically only need to treat symptoms. They usually recover completely. However, some illnesses caused by non-polio enteroviruses can be severe enough to require hospitalization.

If you are concerned about your symptoms, you should contact your health care provider.

Additional Resources

Hand washing information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

Cover Your Cough Information & Posters:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html?s_cid=cdc_homepage_whatsnew_001. Updated by CDC, September 8, 2014.

Virginia Department of Health, Commissioner's Letter to Clinicians, *Emerging Infectious Update: Enterovirus D68*. September 9, 2014.

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