
Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68)

Information for Families and Schools



What is Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68)?

Enteroviruses are very common viruses. There are more than 100 types of enteroviruses. It is estimated that 10 to 15 million enterovirus infections occur in the United States each year. Most enterovirus infections in the U.S. occur seasonally during the summer and fall. In fact, enteroviruses are the second most frequent cause of “the common cold.”

EV-D68 infections occur much less often than other enterovirus strains, but like other strains, EV-D68 spreads through close contact with infected people. EV-D68 starts out like the common cold but can quickly turn serious – especially in children with asthma. This is a lung virus that causes mild to severe respiratory illness.

What are the symptoms?

People who are infected with EV-D68 can have a range of symptoms, from mild to severe illness requiring hospitalization. Symptoms may include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Cough
- New onset wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Tachycardia (fast heartbeat)
- Difficulty speaking

How is it transmitted?

EV-D68 can be found in an infected person's secretions (such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum). An infected person can spread the virus even if they don't have symptoms. You can get exposed to the virus by:

- Having close contact, such as touching or shaking hands, with an infected person
- Touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them

Who is at highest risk?

EV-D68 is most often seen in children ages 6 – 16, but occurs in all ages. People with a history of asthma may be at an increased risk.

How do you prevent EV-D68?

There is no vaccine to protect from EV-D68 infection. Although it is very difficult to completely prevent children from getting sick, parents and school staff can help by reminding children to follow these tips:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid kissing, hugging, shaking hands, 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 talk with your doctor
- Cover your cough

Soap and water work best but when that isn't possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a great alternative. Teachers can assist by reminding children to wash hands before lunch and after students return from the restroom.

How do you treat EV-D68?

There is no treatment for EV-D68 infections; specifically there are no anti-viral medications or vaccinations currently available for this purpose. Many infections will be mild and self-limited, requiring only symptomatic treatment. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy.