

TO: School Nurses

FROM: Patsy Kelso, State Epidemiologist for Infectious Diseases

Respiratory Illness Due to Enterovirus (EV-D68)

An uncommon form of enterovirus called EV-D68 has been identified in several states among children hospitalized with severe respiratory illness.

Action steps for school nurses:

- Stay informed about EV-D68 so that you can provide balanced information for parents, children and staff.
- Encourage parents of children with asthma or other respiratory difficulties to work closely with their health care provider to ensure optimum asthma control. A history of asthma may make children more susceptible to severe illness from EV-D68.
- Children with cold-like symptoms who develop difficulty breathing need prompt medical attention.
- Promote influenza immunizations. This won't prevent EV-D68, but will help protect children from this serious infection.
- Encourage frequent hand washing with soap and water, and ensure routine environmental cleaning.

Key Information about EV-D68

Symptoms: EV-D68 has been reported to cause mild to severe respiratory illness. There is often no fever. The full spectrum of EV-D68 illness is not well-defined.

Treatment: There is no specific treatment for EV-D68 infections. Many infections will be mild and self-limited, requiring only treatment of the symptoms. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy.

Transmission and Prevention: There are no vaccines for preventing EV-D68 infections. It appears to spread through close contact with infected people. Transmission of respiratory illnesses can be decreased by following these steps:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Encourage children and staff to cover their coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.

Surveillance: EV-D68 is not a reportable disease. However, medical providers should report outbreaks of severe respiratory illnesses to the Vermont Department of Health. Testing for EV-D68 is not easily available. The Health Department will work with physicians on a case-by-case basis to arrange testing for children hospitalized with acute respiratory illness of unknown origin.

Please contact your District Health Office or the Health Department's Epidemiology Unit 24/7 at 802-863-7240 for additional information as needed.

More information on enteroviruses and on EV-D68 is available at the CDC website:
<http://www.cdc.gov>

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