Enterovirus D68 – what you need to know

CDC background on enteroviruses

- Enteroviruses are very common viruses; there are more than 100 types.
- It is estimated that 10 to 15 million enterovirus infections occur in the United States each year.
- Most people infected with enteroviruses have no symptoms or only mild respiratory or flu-like symptoms, but some infections can be serious.
- Infants, children, and teenagers are most likely to get infected with enteroviruses and become sick.
- Most enterovirus infections in the United States occur seasonally during the summer and fall.

Enterovirus D68

Enterovirus 68 (EV-D68) infections are thought to occur less commonly than infections with other enteroviruses, but it is not a new or mysterious virus. It was identified in 1962 and only rarely causes the problems we are seeing now with severe respiratory distress.

Symptoms

EV-D68 usually can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. However, the full spectrum of EV-D68 illness is not well-defined. Most people who get infected are infants, children and teens. Most start with common cold symptoms of runny nose and cough. Some, but not all, may also have fever. For more severe cases, difficulty breathing, wheezing or problems catching your breath may occur.

Transmission

EV-D68, like other enteroviruses, appears to spread through close contact with infected people through saliva and mucous shared through coughs, sneezes or touching infected objects.

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.
No anti-viral medications are currently available for treating EV-D68 infections.

**Prevention**

There are no vaccines for preventing EV-D68 infections.

Ways to help reduce the risk of getting infected with EV-D68:

- Wash hands often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed 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, using household cleaners.

**Guidance for health care professionals**

Healthcare Professionals should:

- Be aware of EV-D68 as a potential cause of respiratory illness.
- Consider laboratory testing of respiratory specimens for enteroviruses when the cause of infection in severely ill patients is unclear, especially when admitted to the hospital. Typing for enteroviruses is not readily available.
- Infection Prevention will report outbreaks of enterovirus infections to state health departments for further guidance and is working closely with the Minnesota Department of Health.

EV-D68 infection is not a reportable disease in the United States and as such CDC does not have a surveillance system that specifically collects information on EV-D68 infections. In addition, no data is currently available regarding the overall burden of morbidity or mortality from EV-D68 in the United States.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with the Infection Prevention and Control team member in your area.