

Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) Information for School Health Clinicians

October 7, 2014

Background

Clusters of severe respiratory illness were first reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in August 2014, from Kansas City, MO and Chicago, IL. In the majority of respiratory specimens submitted to CDC, Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) was identified. Since August, EV-D68 has been identified in most states in the U.S. New Hampshire's first cases of EV-D68 were confirmed in September.

Enteroviruses are a group of more than 100 different specific viruses, including Enterovirus D-68, which normally circulate in the summer and fall months. Enteroviruses can cause a mild to severe febrile or upper respiratory tract illness. They are also a common cause of aseptic (or viral) meningitis; rarely do they cause encephalitis or paralysis. Infants, children, and adolescents are more likely to become ill with enterovirus infections, as they may not have immunity from previous exposure to these viruses. Enterovirus-D68 appears to be primarily causing respiratory illness, and children and adolescents with a history of respiratory illness appear to be at higher risk of complications. It is still under investigation whether EV-D68 may be contributing to several cases of a neurological illness that have been reported.

The transmission of EV-D68 is person-to-person via respiratory secretions. There is no vaccine available for EV-D68. There are no antiviral medications currently available for people who are infected with EV-D68.

Recommendations

The NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health Services recommends the following for school health clinicians:

- Maintain an awareness of EV-D68 as a possible cause of acute, unexplained respiratory illness, even if the student does not have a fever.
- Children should remain out of school until they are without a fever for at least 24 hours (off any anti-fever medications) and until the child is feeling better.
- Once a child returns to school they should continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and good hand washing.
- Enteroviruses are less susceptible to alcohol-based hand rub, so hand washing with soap and water is recommended.
- Ensure that students with asthma have an asthma action plan.
- Reinforce use of the asthma action plan, including adherence to prescribed long-term control medications and immediate access to rescue medications.
- Encourage parents of children with asthma to seek care early when experiencing an exacerbation.
- Report clusters of severe respiratory illness in your school to your local health department or to the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services at 603-271-4496.

Additional Information and Resources

NH Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Services: 603-271-4496
<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

CDC Cover Your Cough and Clean Hands Poster
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>

CDC Hand Washing Posters
<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014