ENTEROVIRUS D68 (EV-D68) FACT SHEET

What are enteroviruses and Enterovirus D68?

Enteroviruses are very common viruses that cause different types of infections. There are over 100 different types of enteroviruses. It is estimated that 10 million to 15 million enterovirus infections occur in the U.S. each year. Most people infected with enteroviruses have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but some infections can be serious**. Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is a less common type of enterovirus, but is not new**. It usually causes mild respiratory illness, similar to those seen in the common cold, but some individuals can become severely ill. The 2014 outbreak of EV-D68 appears to be associated with an increase in the level of respiratory illness among people in general and more severe disease in some people, particularly children with asthma.

***EV-D68 is NOT influenza**

D68 is similar to an influenza outbreak which may not pose a serious health threat for the average person. However, influenza is caused by a different virus, and in children and adults with a pre-existing condition such as asthma, D68 can lead to respiratory illness. All individuals, especially children in the higher risk category (including those with asthma), should follow their health care provider's recommendations and receive their annual flu vaccine.

What are the symptoms of EV-D68?

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, body and muscle aches. Severe symptoms may include difficulty breathing, fever, rash and possibly life-threatening or life-ending complication. Some individuals, especially those with underlying conditions, such as asthma or a weakened immune system, may experience more severe complications including difficulty breathing.

How is EV-D68 Spread?

Like a cold, EV-D68 is spread through respiratory secretions, such as mucus, saliva, and viral particles in the air after infected people sneeze or cough. Individuals can also become infected by touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. EV-D68 needs a moist environment (e.g. mucus, saliva, sputum) to remain viable. However, the virus is very susceptible to drying and is not capable of being spread once it has dried on a surface.

The American Society for Microbiology recently reported that a contaminated single doorknob or table top can spread viruses throughout a building, hotel, health-care facility, or school within 2 to 4 hours. Surfaces

capable of carrying infectious organisms include light switches, bed rails, table tops, countertops, push buttons, coffee pot handles, sink tap handles, door knobs, phones and computer equipment. Keeping kids safe and healthy is an increasing challenge for schools and day-care facilities.

Who is at risk for EV-D68?

Anyone can become infected with EV-D68. However, individuals with weakened immune systems or chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, are at a higher risk. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises, "children who have previously been diagnosed with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and communicate with their health care provider regarding yellow and red zone instructions." The CDC has reported that more than half of the children in the states with cases of lab-confirmed EV-D68 in 2014 have a history of asthma or wheezing.

What are the treatments for EV-D68?

There is no specific treatment for people with respiratory illness caused by EV-D68. For mild respiratory illness, you can help relieve symptoms by taking over-the-counter medications for pain and fever. Aspirin should not be given to children. There are no antiviral medications currently available for people who become infected with EV-D68.

Some experiencing more severe asthma and respiratory related symptoms will need more intensive treatment and should be seen by their health care provider right away. Since people with asthma are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses, they should regularly take asthma medicines and maintain control of their illness during this time. They should also take advantage of influenza vaccine since people with asthma have a difficult time with respiratory illnesses.

What can be done to prevent the spread of EV-D68 in schools?

Strategies to help prevent respiratory illnesses include:

- Students and staff should stay home if they are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Use standard disinfection procedures using a hospital-grade disinfectant that is EPA-approved for norovirus and rhinovirus, or a 1:10 bleach solution for surfaces, such as toys and other objects, and on surfaces that are touched often, which can include desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, and phones.

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are **NOT** effective against EV-D68, which is why handwashing with soap and water is so important. Follow your school and corporation policies for ill students and staff as they pertain to exclusion and readmission to school. Remind parents to keep kids home when they are sick.

How should school health professionals report excessive respiratory illness and absenteeism rates?

Report an increase in respiratory illness levels among students and/or staff to your local health department. According to state law, schools must report an absenteeism rate of >20% of the enrolled student population to your local health department, as well as the State Attendance Officer at the Indiana Department of Education (cdanyluk@doe.in.gov or 317-232-9150). However, any unusual increase in absenteeism should be reported. Continue to follow your corporation/school attendance reporting policies.

Where can I get more information?

Information about enteroviruses and EV-D68:

- CDC - http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html
- ISDH - http://bit.ly/1rZtkaE (New information is frequently added to this page)

Information on hand-washing : http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing

Sources:

Indiana State Department of Health
Center for Disease Control and Prevention
National Asthma Educator Certification Board