

Protecting your kids from Enterovirus D68

Enteroviruses affect millions of people worldwide each year, and are often found in the respiratory secretions (e.g., saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus) and stool of an infected person.

Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is one of many non-polio enteroviruses. EV-D68 infections are thought to occur less commonly than infections with other enteroviruses. Compared with other enteroviruses, EV-D68 has been rarely reported in the United States for the last 40 years.

EV D68 is a rare strain of a very common virus (Enterovirus). The most important thing to be watch full is of any signs of difficulty breathing such as wheezing or a coughing that won't get any better.

Many children and adults who become sick with the virus may not know they have it because the virus sometimes presents with mild symptoms. Children with underlying health problems especially respiratory, such as Asthma, could end up in emergency room.

Though enterovirus D68 most commonly causes respiratory illness, other symptoms may include fever, rash, gastrointestinal distress and in rare cases neurologic illness, such as aseptic meningitis and encephalitis.

As with any other virus, one can reduce their risk for contracting this virus through frequent hand-washing. The incubation period (the time from the moment of exposure to an infectious agent to the time of first sign/symptom of illness) could be as long as 7-9 days, so it's important to use hand sanitizer and frequently disinfect surfaces, such as tabletops and doorknobs, to avoid germs from spreading.

Any child that shows signs of illness especially respiratory (wheezing/difficulty breathing/coughing/fever) should seek out immediate medical help. There is no specific treatment for this enterovirus D68, and no vaccines. However, doctors can provide children who are admitted to the hospital with supportive care, such as oxygen, IV fluids and also drugs like Albuterol to help alleviate the respiratory symptoms and steroids to reduce inflammation in the lungs.

Parents should not panic or worry at this time since kids, especially in school, can pick up all sorts of viruses/germs. A healthy, normal school-age kid can get as many 7 to 10 viruses a year and that's pretty normal.

Physicians can order a nasal swab to diagnose the Enterovirus. However, to further diagnose the type D-68, the specimen has to be sent to CDC in Atlanta which they have not recommended it yet.

Other links

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/infections/Pages/Reports-of-a-Severe-Respiratory-Illness-on-the-Rise.aspx>