

9/18/14

PARENT MEDICAL ALERT: ENTEROVIRUS D68 (EV D68)

Dear Parents,

By now most of you are aware of a virus, Enterovirus D68 (EV D68) that has been identified in school aged children in a number of states, including NYS. While the virus is not new, it seems to be causing more serious illness this year, especially in children with underlying respiratory problems, like asthma or cystic fibrosis. Not all people who get EV D68 will have severe illness, but if your child shows signs of difficulty breathing or severe wheezing with a respiratory illness, that is a reason to take your child to be evaluated immediately.

If your child has a fresh respiratory illness with mild symptoms such as fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, body and muscle aches, please do not send your child to school until he/she is fever free off fever reducing medicines and is well enough to stay in class all day and learn. Until then, please allow your child to rest and recover at home.

Since EV-D68 causes respiratory illness, the virus can be found in an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum. EV-D68 likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces. Therefore, frequent hand washing at least every two hours, whenever hands are dirty, after toileting, and before and after eating is important. If soap and water are not available, 60% or greater alcohol based hand sanitizers used with adult supervision are an option. Reminding your children not to share personal items is important.

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, but avoiding aspirin for children, as you would for any viral illness. For severe respiratory illness, please do not delay contacting your physician or other health care provider.

Please be assured that the district is reminding students to use good respiratory etiquette when coughing and sneezing, disposing tissues in a trash can, washing hands when dirty, and not sharing personal items. The school continues to maintain good environmental clean-up with cleaning of high touch surfaces. Yet, it is still good idea to remind your children, especially the little ones, to avoid putting their hands into their mouths or touching their noses or eyes. Thank you for your cooperation.

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