



## COLORADO

Department of Public  
Health & Environment

Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

### Basic Questions and Answers: Respiratory Illness Due to Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) in Colorado\* September 8, 2014

#### What is the current situation?

In late August, pediatric hospitals in the Denver, Colorado area began reporting an increase of respiratory illnesses in their facilities. Some children have required treatment in pediatric intensive care units, but thus far no deaths have been reported. Testing of specimens from several severely ill cases at a specialized laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was positive for enterovirus D68.

Public health officials are actively investigating these situations, and will provide updated information as indicated. Additional information about human enterovirus D68 in other cities can be found in today's CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6038a1.htm>.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment sent a Health Alert to medical providers and public health officials throughout the state on September 3, alerting them to the occurrence of these illnesses. Health Updates will be sent as more information and guidance become available.

#### What are enteroviruses?

Enteroviruses are very common viruses. There are more than 100 types of enteroviruses. It is estimated that 10 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. Most enterovirus infections in the U.S. occur seasonally during the summer and fall, and outbreaks tend to occur in several-year cycles.

#### What is Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68)?

Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) is a type of enterovirus that was first detected in California in 1962 from four children with respiratory illness; it has been reported rarely since that time. EV-D68 infections appear to occur less commonly than those with certain other types of enteroviruses.

Unlike the majority of enteroviruses that cause disease in the form of a mild upper respiratory illness, rash illness with fever, or neurologic illness (such as aseptic meningitis and encephalitis), EV-D68 has been associated almost exclusively with respiratory disease, which can range from mild to severe. However, other manifestations of illness might also occur.

No data is currently available regarding the numbers of illness, and possibly deaths, from EV-D68 in the U.S. Outbreaks of respiratory illness associated with EV-D68 have been investigated in Asia, Europe, and the U.S. during the past few years.



## What are the symptoms of Enterovirus-D68 infection?

EV-D68 appears to primarily cause respiratory illness, which as ranged from relatively mild illness to severe illness requiring hospitalization in an intensive care unit. Specific symptoms have included difficulty breathing, and wheezing or asthma exacerbation. A minority of patients appear to have fever.

## How is Enterovirus-D68 infection diagnosed?

Special laboratory tests are required to diagnose EV-D68.

## How is Enterovirus-D68 infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for EV-D68 infections; specifically there are no anti-viral medications currently available for this purpose. Many infections will be mild and self-limited, requiring only symptomatic treatment. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy.

## How is EV-D68 transmitted?

EV-D68, like other enteroviruses, appears to spread through close contact with infected people. (See the next question for ways to reduce transmission.)

## What precautions can people take to reduce the risk of acquiring, or transmitting, EV-D68 and other enterovirus infections?

- Wash hands often with 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;
- Stay home when feeling sick, and obtain consultation from your health care provider.
- Patients with asthma should use their asthma controlling medications as prescribed and seek medical care if they develop an asthma exacerbation.

## Is there a vaccine for EV-D68?

No vaccine is available.

## Is EV-D68 a reportable disease in Colorado?

Medical providers are not required to report known or suspected cases of EV-D68 to public health authorities. However, medical providers should report clusters or outbreaks of unexplained respiratory illnesses to the local public health agency, or to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

