



Control of Viral Respiratory Illness for Schools and Day Care Centers

With the recent increase in respiratory illness reports in many parts of the nation and Illinois, alongside the upcoming cold and flu season, the Kane County Health Department is recommending increased awareness and actions to help control and prevent the spread of illness, toward keeping our community safe and healthy.

As recently reported by the Illinois Department of Public Health, enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) causes respiratory illness, and the virus can be found in respiratory secretions such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum. The virus likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces. Enteroviruses are commonly occurring, causing 10 to 15 million infections a year. These usually present as mild infections especially in young children. Many people infected with enteroviruses do not present with any symptoms.

Recently, children presenting with severe respiratory illness were diagnosed with a rare form of enterovirus D68 (EV-D68). Specific symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing, and wheezing or asthma exacerbation. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy. There is no specific treatment or vaccine for EV-D68 infections; no antiviral medications are currently available for treating of EV-D68 infections.

You can help protect yourself and your family from respiratory illnesses by following these steps:

- If you or a family member are experiencing cold-like symptoms with wheezing or difficulty breathing, contact your physician immediately to arrange for appropriate testing and care.
- To prevent spread of respiratory illness due to enterovirus, influenza, and other infections in the school and work settings, we recommend that ill persons stay home if experiencing respiratory illness symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat, and wheezing).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your 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 doorknobs and toys, especially if someone is sick.
- To protect against influenza, get yourself and your family vaccinated against seasonal flu. Vaccination is recommended yearly for everyone 6 months and older.

For more information visit our website at <http://www.kanehealth.com/EV-D68.htm>