



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Agency of Human Services

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you may have heard in the news recently, a virus called enterovirus-D68 (EV-68) has been spreading in several states. This virus has been causing respiratory illnesses ranging from mild cold symptoms to more serious symptoms that require hospitalization. In the event that this virus spreads to Vermont, we want to provide you with information about the illness and how to prevent it from spreading in your community.

EV-68 is one type of virus from a group of very common viruses called enteroviruses. Most people who are infected with enteroviruses have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but some infections can be serious. In the U.S., people are more likely to get enteroviruses in the summer and fall.

Children who are mildly ill might have:

- Cold symptoms: runny nose, congestion
- Wheezing: especially in children who have asthma, but wheezing might occur in other children as well
- Cough
- Fever (sometimes, but not always with this infection)

A history of **asthma** may put children at higher risk for severe illness from EV-68. Children with severe illness might have trouble breathing or severe wheezing, and should be evaluated by a medical provider as soon as possible.

This virus spreads from close contact with an infected person who is coughing or sneezing, or from contaminated hands and common objects such as toys, bottles and cups and furniture surfaces that are soiled with mucous or saliva from an infected person.

To best protect your family, follow these suggestions for infection control:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers and after coughing and sneezing into your hands.
- Teach children to always cover their cough with a tissue or cough into the crook of their elbow instead of into their hands.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Don't kiss, hug or share cups/utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched often, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

Keep your child at home if she/he appears to be severely ill, or meets general exclusion criteria such as fever with cough, worsening respiratory symptoms (including wheezing), or other symptoms that prevent the child from joining in activities as determined by the staff of the child care program or school.

Treat typical cold symptoms such as: stuffy nose, headache, fatigue and sore throat as you normally would, with rest, drink plenty of liquids, use saline nasal drops and run a humidifier in the home. Keep a close eye on sick children, especially those with asthma. **If you notice a child is breathing faster or harder than usual, call your health care provider right away.**

Be aware of the general emergency warning signs in a child, which include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing that persists or worsens
- Bluish skin color or lips.
- Dehydration suspected: No urine output for more than 8 hours AND very dry mouth, no tears AND not taking or able to hold oral fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Symptoms improve then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

For more information go to the Vermont Department of Health website at www.healthvermont.gov, and select Contents A to Z. Click on E for enterovirus D68 (EV-68) and that will lead you to the correct page - <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/enterovirus/ev68.aspx>.