



EV-68: Guidance for Early Childcare Programs

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What is enterovirus 68?

Enterovirus 68 (EV-68) is a germ that was first identified in California in 1962. It has not been commonly diagnosed in the United States.

What are the symptoms of EV-68 infection?

The germ can cause fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, and body and muscle aches, but often there is no fever. Children with asthma or wheezing appear to have a higher risk of severe disease, and are more likely to be hospitalized. It is important to remember that the symptoms of EV-68 can be like those caused by many other germs, including influenza.

How does this germ spread?

The virus is spread by direct contact (touching) or by respiratory droplets. When someone sick with EV-68 coughs or sneezes, particles (“respiratory droplets”) are created and fall to the ground within 3 to 6 feet. EV-68 is in an infected person’s saliva, nasal mucus, and sputum (spit). Transmission can also occur if someone touches a contaminated surface then touches his or her eyes, mouth, or nose without cleaning their hands.

Who is at risk?

So far, infants, children, and teenagers have been more likely to get EV-68. **Children with asthma or wheezing have been more likely to develop severe illness.**

How is EV-D68 diagnosed?

In most cases, laboratory testing to specifically identify EV-68 is not needed because treatment does not change based on the type of enterovirus.

What is the treatment for EV-68?

Treatment is supportive. Medicines to reduce fever and relieve pain are often used. Aspirin should never be used in children.

Is there a vaccine? There is NO vaccine against EV-68.

Guidelines for Early Childcare Programs

Use Everyday Prevention Measures

Early childcare programs should take the following steps to reduce the risk of spread of illness:

- Children and staff should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm. Teach children to cough into the "chicken wing"!
- Children and staff should wash hands often with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Everyone should wash their hands before preparing food or eating and after using the bathroom or changing diapers. Soap and water is best, but alcohol based hand sanitizers can be used. **The most important thing is that everyone cleans their hands frequently.**
- Children and staff should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Do not allow children to share utensils, cups, etc. Family style food should be served by the staff (rather than having children help themselves). Toys that children put into their mouths should not be shared with another child until they have been cleaned and disinfected.
- Influenza season is coming! Influenza may look like EV-68, so making sure everyone 6 months of age or older get the flu vaccine is important!

Be alert for illness

Know which children have asthma or wheezing and what their asthma treatment plan is. Parents or guardians of children with asthma or wheezing who have asthma symptoms that are worse than usual, symptoms that don't get better with their usual asthma treatment, or asthma or wheezing that isn't going away should be advised to contact the child's primary care provider.

Sick children should stay home

Make sure parents and guardians keep sick children at home. If the child becomes sick at the early childcare program, the parent or guardian should be called to pick up the child. Every effort should be made to avoid sending the child home using group transportation. Until pick-up, if possible, have the child remain about 6 feet from other children. If the child is severely ill, call 911 and contact the parent or guardian. Children may return to the early childcare program 24 hours **after** resolution of predominant symptoms. Ill children should not be in group care.

Clean frequently

Toys and surfaces in the early childcare program should be washed and disinfected daily. A bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach in one gallon of water) made fresh everyday can be used as a disinfectant.

Everyone should clean their hands frequently preferably with soap and water

If you have questions or need more information, please contact the Boston Public Health Commission Infectious Disease Bureau at 617-534-5611.