
Enterovirus D68: Frequently Asked Questions for School Health Professionals

What are enteroviruses?

- Enteroviruses are very common viruses; there are more than 100 different types.
- Around 10 to 15 million enterovirus infections occur in the United States each year.
- Most infected people have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but some infections can be serious.
- Infants, children, and teenagers are more likely than adults to get infected with enteroviruses and become sick.
- Fall is a common time for enteroviruses to cause respiratory illness.

What is enterovirus D68?

- Enterovirus D68 infections are less common than infections with other enteroviruses.
- Enterovirus D68 was first identified in California in 1962.
- The Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory has identified enterovirus D68 in Minnesota every year since 2011.
- No recent cases of enterovirus D68 have been identified in Minnesota, but an increase in acute respiratory illness has been detected.
- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is watching for enterovirus D68 through our routine respiratory surveillance system.

What are the symptoms of enterovirus D68?

- It can cause symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, cough, wheezing, rash, and a fever.
- Less often, enteroviruses can cause pneumonia, meningitis (swelling of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord), or encephalitis (swelling of the brain).
- Some individuals, especially those with underlying conditions, such as asthma or a weakened immune system, may experience more severe complications including difficulty breathing.
- If a person has severe symptoms, contact a health care provider.

How is enterovirus D68 spread to others?

- Enterovirus D68 is found in saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum.
- Like a cold or influenza, enterovirus D68 spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches surfaces.

What can we do to prevent the spread of enterovirus D68 in schools?

- There are no vaccines for preventing enterovirus D68 infections.
- You can help protect yourself from respiratory illnesses by following these steps:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
 - Use standard disinfection procedures for surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective against enteroviruses, which is why hand washing is so important.
- The enterovirus D68 does not live long outside the body. Once a surface is dry, it likely does not contain live virus.
- As always, remind parents to keep kids home when they are sick.

How should school health professionals report respiratory illness such as enterovirus D68?

- Respiratory illnesses should be reported using the Influenza-like Illness Report Form, www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/school/report.pdf.
- Send in the report form once at the beginning of each outbreak. You should still report when you have suspected influenza or influenza-like illness later in the school year.

Where can I get more information?

- Information about enteroviruses
 - MDH website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/respiratory/index.html
 - CDC website: www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/
- Hennepin county parent fact sheet on enteroviruses: www.hennepin.us/~media/hennepinus/residents/health-medical/documents/1305-entero-parent.pdf