

Controlling the Spread of Enterovirus D68: Information for North Carolina Schools and Child Care Settings

Since mid-August, 2014, enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) has been increasingly identified across the country in association with respiratory illness. Severe illnesses have been reported, particularly among children with asthma. EV-D68 can spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces.

In order to prevent the spread of EV-D68, the North Carolina Division of Public Health recommends the following actions for all schools and child care centers:

Hand Washing

- All staff and children should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. At minimum, hand washing should occur at the following times:
 - Upon arrival to the facility
 - Before handling food and before eating meals or snacks
 - Before and after caring for someone who is sick
 - After using the toilet or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
 - Before and after changing diapers
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Hand sanitizer may be used in addition to hand washing but should not replace washing hands with soap and water. Hand sanitizers are not recommended for children <24 months of age.

Exclusions

- Staff and children with respiratory illness should be excluded if they have excessive coughing or are not feeling well enough to participate in regular activities.
- Those with fever should be excluded until at least 24 hours after fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Cleaning

- All surfaces should continue to be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected as required per local policy. Surfaces commonly touched by multiple students/children should be sanitized daily.
- Child care staff should pay extra attention to toys that are placed in children's mouths, since these are likely to be contaminated with respiratory viruses.
- Any surface contaminated with mucous or other body fluids should be disinfected.

Other Actions

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Since people with asthma are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses, they should regularly take medicines and follow guidance to maintain control of their illness.
- All staff and children over 6 months of age should receive a flu vaccine. Although flu vaccines won't protect against EV-D68, they can help prevent another important cause of respiratory illness that could be going around at the same time.

Contact your local health department if you have questions or are seeing higher than normal absentee rates due to respiratory illness.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov or epi.publichealth.nc.gov

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