

NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

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Respiratory Virus EV-D68 Update – No Cause for Alarm

Five Cases Reported in Dane County

Madison WI – October 3, 2014 - Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is a virus that is reportedly causing mild to severe respiratory illness (runny nose, cough, difficulty breathing) with and without fever. On October 3rd Public Health Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) was notified of test results revealing five cases in Dane County.

This presents no cause for alarm. Enteroviruses are very common. There are over 100 types of enterovirus, although this EV-D68 strain has previously been uncommon in the U.S. Most of these enterovirus infections will produce a mild illness and the vast majority of children who are infected will not require medical attention. However, parents of children with asthma or other lung conditions should be aware that their children may be more susceptible to serious illness. In other states, presumed EV-D68 outbreaks are resulting in growing numbers of children requiring emergency room visits and hospitalizations, primarily for difficulties with breathing and severe asthma. No such details are currently available regarding the Dane County cases.

EV-D68 can be found in saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum and, like the common cold, likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or a person touches contaminated surfaces. Infants, children and teenagers are more likely than adults to get infected with enteroviruses and become sick.

According to Amanda Kita-Yarbro, communicable disease epidemiologist for PHMDC “It is common to see more respiratory illnesses at this time of year caused by many different viruses. Usually symptoms are mild and limited, but if you are concerned about your own or your child’s symptoms, it’s important to call your health care provider.”

People who are not experiencing severe illness do not need to seek medical evaluation or testing for EV-D68. However, when anyone with asthma develops any respiratory illness, it is very important to make sure that the asthma symptoms are under control and to seek immediate medical attention if breathing problems develop.

There is no specific treatment for EV-D68 infections and there is no vaccine available for this illness. As with most respiratory illnesses, the standard advice is to get plenty of rest and fluids. Some over-the-counter medications may help ease symptoms in standard cases. The illness can only be confirmed by laboratory testing, which is only offered to patients that meet specific criteria set by the Wisconsin Division of Public Health.

Respiratory viruses often spread in the fall when children return to school. Prevention of EV-D68 is the same as prevention of colds and other respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often (Alcohol hand-sanitizer gel can be used if handwashing is not possible)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Don’t share drinks or eating utensils with people who are sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Stay home if you’re sick

If you have questions about symptoms you or your child are having, call your doctor. If someone is having trouble breathing, call 911 and seek medical care right away.

EV-D68 is not a reportable disease, which means that hospitals and health care providers are not required to report cases to local health departments.

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An online version of this release is available at

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/news/respiratory-virus-ev-d68-update-no-cause-for-alarm>