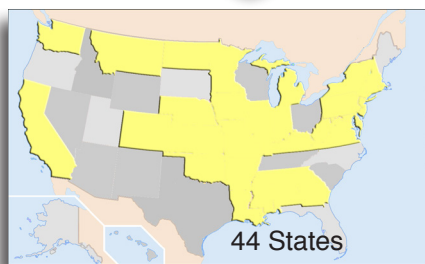
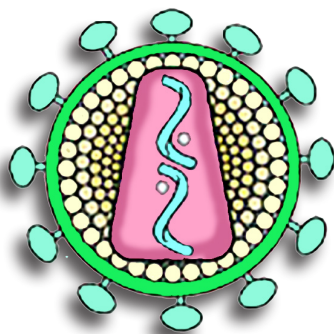




by Monica Hamburg, MD  
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# Enterovirus D68

## has been reported locally...

Some diseases really don't get very good names...

**Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68)** has been in the news a lot lately, and we understand parents are very concerned. Just as most children who get the "flu" in the winter recover completely, there are rare serious complications. Most children who get **EV D68** will recover completely, although rare cases of paralysis or death have been reported

### **What do you need to know about this virus?**

While the specific strain **EV D68** is not very common, *non-polio enteroviruses* in general are very common. These viruses enter the human body through the gastrointestinal tract (enteral) and we see them cause many illnesses in our area such as Hand-Foot-Mouth (*Coxsackie virus*) in the summer and respiratory infections in the fall. *Polio* is another form of *enterovirus*, but it has been nearly eliminated by *polio* vaccine.

**EV D68** enters the body through contact with saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus. It usually causes mild symptoms of fever and cough, but a number of children have been hospitalized due to more severe symptoms this season. It seems to affect young children far more than adults.

While many of the hospitalized children are in Colorado and Missouri, the virus has now been identified in 44 states including New York. Although some of these children required intensive care, most have fully recovered. There were 22 cases confirmed at Westchester Medical Center and all have done well. Children with underlying pulmonary problems such as asthma seem to be the hardest hit by this virus.

### **What can you do to avoid EV D68?**

The same precautions you take to avoid any viral infection in the cold and flu season is what you need to do to avoid this one: hand washing, hand sanitizer, encourage children not to put their hands in the mouth/nose/eyes, teach your child to cover her cough by coughing into a tissue or into her elbow, and keep your child home from school/activities if they are having fever and cough. Children with asthma should follow their *asthma action plan* carefully.

### **What is the treatment of EV D68?**

There is no specific treatment for this virus. Those who are hospitalized receive supportive care to help them breathe.

### **How do I know if my child has EV D68?**

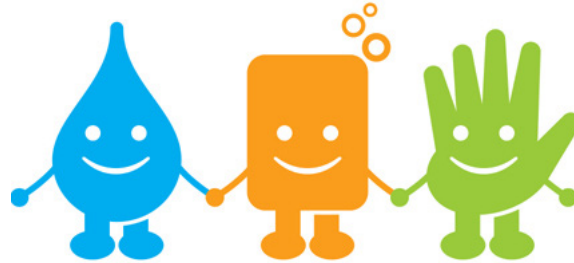
Testing for this virus is being performed only in hospitals on children who are very sick. Children with mild cough and cold symptoms do not need to be tested. There is no office test for **EV D68**.

Remember that influenza, the flu, is a greater risk to your child than **EV D68**! About 500 cases of **EV D68** have been reported so far, while influenza cases number over 10 million per year. Over 100



children died of flu complications last year, and these were preventable with influenza vaccine. Please call our office to schedule flu vaccine for your child (see our full article on flu vaccines in our Fall *Parentletter*).

So, teach your child to wash their hands well, get flu vaccine, and have an asthma action plan if your child has asthma. Call us if your child is ill, but do not panic over **EV D68!**



We hope you find our Parentletter helpful and informative. Please keep in mind that receipt of this newsletter does not create a doctor/patient relationship and that it is not meant to serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. For particular pediatric medical concerns, including decisions about diagnoses, medications and other treatments, or if you have any questions after reading this newsletter, we encourage you to speak with your child's pediatrician.

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