Respiratory Illness Due to Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68)

What is the current situation?
This year, an uncommon form of enterovirus called EV-D68 has been found circulating in Missouri and Illinois. This is a rapidly evolving situation and additional states also may report circulation of this virus. Testing of specimens from individuals diagnosed with enterovirus infection were sent to a specialized laboratory at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 11 specimens from a Chicago hospital were positive for Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68). To date, there have been no reported deaths due to EV-68 in Illinois.

What are the symptoms of Enterovirus-D68 infection?
EV-D68 appears to primarily cause respiratory illness, which as ranged from relatively mild illness to severe illness requiring hospitalization in an intensive care unit. Specific symptoms have included fever, difficulty breathing, and wheezing or asthma exacerbation.

How is Enterovirus-D68 infection treated?
There are no anti-viral medications currently available to treat EV-D68 infections. Many infections will be mild and self-limited, requiring only symptomatic treatment. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized and receive intensive supportive therapy.

How is EV-D68 transmitted?
EV-D68, like other enteroviruses, appears to spread through close contact with infected people. (See the next question for ways to reduce transmission.)

What precautions can people take to reduce the risk of acquiring, or transmitting, EV-D68 and other enterovirus infections?
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick and consult your health care provider.
- There is no vaccine available.