

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

October 14, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Every year, millions of children in the United States catch enteroviruses that can cause coughing, sneezing, and fever. This year, the enterovirus that is most commonly causing respiratory illness in children across the country is enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68). Take basic steps to keep your child from getting and spreading EV-D68.

We are in the peak season for cold and flu symptoms. Respiratory diseases are spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches a surface that is then touched by others.

Infants, children, and teenagers are most likely to become infected with enteroviruses. Mild symptoms of EV-D68 may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough and body and muscle aches. Severe symptoms may include wheezing and difficulty breathing. If your child is showing severe symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.

Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water.** Frequent hand washing and non-alcohol surface disinfectants are recommended since alcohol-based hand sanitizers and disinfectants have not been found to be effective against EV-D68.
- **Encourage your children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or into their elbow**
- **Sick children should remain home and should only return to school after they no longer have a fever.** Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the chances of others getting infected.
- **Avoid close contact with those who are sick** such as kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** with a bleach solution (one part bleach to nine parts water). This includes doorknobs, counter tops, desks, tables, toys, etc.
- **Get vaccinated.** Although there is no vaccine for enterovirus, there is a vaccine for more common illnesses like the flu. It is difficult to identify the flu, from other respiratory ailments.

Florida Department of Health in Pasco County

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Children with asthma are at risk for severe symptoms from EV-D68 and other respiratory illnesses. Florida Department of Health (FDOH) recommends you:

- Discuss and update your child's asthma action plan with their primary care provider.
- Ensure your child takes prescribed asthma medications as directed.
- Ensure your child's reliever medication is readily available to him/her.
- Get your child a flu vaccine.
- Call their doctor if they develop new or worsening asthma symptoms.
- Make sure your child's caregiver is aware of his/her condition, and that they know how to help if the child experiences any symptoms related to asthma.

For more information about colds and flu in the community please visit the CDC website at <http://www.flu.gov>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Abarca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Abarca, MPH, MCHES
Assistant Director
Florida Department of Health in Pasco County