ENTEROVIRUS (EV-D68)

Recent news reports on Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) have confirmed it in our area, so we want to be sure you are armed with information and the best tools to avoid it.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s most recent clinical advisory update, on September 16th, EV-D68 often gives people cold symptoms (runny nose and cough) with little to no fever, but it has potential to have a serious effect on people with asthma (as does any respiratory virus). Parents of asthmatics know they need to keep a close eye on their children whenever they start to get a cold and this is no exception!

There are no special treatments for EV-D68 since it is a viral illness. Most people will get better on their own, as they will with any viral illness. Testing is typically not indicated, as it usually doesn’t change what your healthcare provider will do to treat it. There are, however, some things you can do about it at home:

First line of defense: Prevention!

- Practice good hand washing in your household, and throughout your day
- Wash for 20 seconds and use soap and water; singing a tune like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” is a great way to keep kids washing for the full time
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups/utensils with people who are sick
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, light switches, and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick
- If you are sick, cover your cough or sneeze with the inside of your elbow to help limit the spread of illness

Second line of defense: Awareness!

- Hand sanitizers are less effective against enteroviruses – use soap and water instead
- Watch for common cold symptoms and seek care if your child develops difficulty breathing. These can include:
  - Rapid breathing
  - Being able to see lines between your child’s ribs when he/she breathes in
  - Breathing with his/her belly
  - Flaring his/her nostrils when breathing
- If your child has a chronic lung condition, such as asthma, seek care early!