



October 8, 2014

Principals and School Health Personnel,

As you may know, the first case of Enterovirus D68 in Florida has been confirmed in a 10-year-old student attending a school in Polk County. From mid-August through today, there have been over 600 cases of EV-D68 confirmed in 44 states and the District of Columbia.

We are in the peak season for cold and flu symptoms. Therefore, you should take steps to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses and remind students/faculty and parents that prevention is the key to preventing the spread of this virus and other respiratory illnesses.

**The most effective way to prevent enteroviruses is to practice good hygiene regularly by washing hands often.** Like the flu and other respiratory illnesses, EV-D68, is highly contagious and could spread through droplets in coughs or sneezes or when someone touches a contaminated surface like a countertop or doorknob.

Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough and body and muscle aches. Severe symptoms may include wheezing and difficulty breathing.

**Here are a few things you can do to help:**

- **Have children 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.
- **Show children how to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.**
- **Refer students with symptoms of a cold or flu to the school nurse.** The nurse will evaluate the child and determine if they need to be sent home from school. If a child has symptoms of wheezing, trouble breathing, fever, thick nasal discharge, or signs of dehydration, parents should be encouraged to seek the advice of their medical provider.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** with a district-approved cleaner provided by Custodial Services. This includes doorknobs, counter tops, desks, tables, toys, etc.
- **Sick children should remain home.** Keeping children with a fever at home will reduce the chances of others getting infected.
- **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.

For more information about colds and flu in the community please visit the CDC website at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

Schools, child care centers and other organizations that serve children are encouraged to print this helpful infographic about preventing the spread of EV-D68 <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ulyee Choe, DO". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "U" and a cursive "C".

Ulyee Choe, DO  
Director  
Florida Department of Health in Polk County