



Kiowa County Health Department

For Immediate Release

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CDC Confirms Cases of Enterovirus D68 in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) has received confirmation through laboratory testing conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) is circulating and causing respiratory illness in Oklahoma. Although enteroviruses are a common cause of respiratory illness, EV-D68 is a relatively rare type of enterovirus in the United States. To date, EV-D68 has been confirmed in 11 other states, including Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado.

The CDC laboratory has reported seven of 24 specimens submitted from Oklahoma hospitals and laboratories tested positive for the virus which has been associated with an increase in pediatric admissions at hospitals in the central region of the state. EV-D68 infection looks very similar to the common cold with most persons showing symptoms of cough, runny nose, body aches, and possibly a fever. However, in some children the illness can rapidly progress to something more serious where the child has wheezing, difficulty breathing, and difficulty getting enough oxygen into their lungs.

“Children less than 5 years old and children with underlying asthma appear to be at greatest risk of having medical complications from EV-D68 requiring hospitalization,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Kristy Bradley. “If a child develops a cold or a cough, parents and caregivers should just watch the child a little more closely to ensure the respiratory infection is running a normal course. If wheezing or asthma-like symptoms develop, medical care should be accessed immediately.”

Medical providers are not required to report suspected cases of the virus to state public health authorities. Therefore, the number of actual cases in the state cannot be tracked. Officials are, however, monitoring the trend of hospital admissions for acute respiratory illness, and requesting that any outbreaks of respiratory disease in daycares or schools be reported to the OSDH.

There are no specific treatments or vaccines to prevent EV-D68 infections.

People can protect themselves from respiratory illnesses by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoiding touching the eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact and sharing cups and eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as toys, doorknobs and light switches, especially if someone is sick.
- Staying home when sick.

Find more information about enteroviruses contact the Kiowa County Health Department at 580-726-3316 or go to www.health.ok.gov or www.cdc.gov.

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