

Dear Parents/Guardians:

September 2014

This notice is to make you aware of a virus, **Enterovirus D68 (EV-68)**, which may cause severe respiratory illness mostly affecting infants, children and adolescents. The Stratford Board of Education and the Stratford Health Department are working together to monitor symptoms of the illness, absenteeism and/or diagnosis of the illness in Stratford.

In most cases, the virus will cause mild symptoms which may, or may not include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough and/or body and muscle aches.

In some cases the virus may cause severe difficulty breathing and wheezing requiring hospitalization, especially among children. Many of the children who became very ill had a history of asthma or wheezing in the past.

The virus can be spread by an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus or sputum. It may also be spread when someone touches a contaminated surface. If at any time your child experiences difficulty breathing, wheezing or decreases in activity, seek medical attention.

We each need to take precautions to minimize the spread of Enterovirus D68 and any other communicable diseases within our homes, schools and community. Currently there are no vaccines for preventing for EV-D68 infection.

Every member of the school community – staff members, students and parents – must consider potential harm to others when making decisions to come (or send a child) to school with early symptoms of an acute illness.

We need your cooperation to help minimize the prevalence and spread of communicable illnesses in our community.

For current information re: EV-D68 see <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about EV-D68.html>

- **Teach your children preventive strategies** such as: avoiding close contact with others; covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing/coughing (or coughing/sneezing into an elbow rather than hand); disposing of used tissue into a wastebasket; frequently washing their hands with soap and water and not touching their eyes, nose or mouth. You should also clean and disinfect surfaces such as toys and doorknobs frequently.
- **Make plans for child care** in the event that your child becomes ill.
- **Keep your children home when they have early symptoms** indicative of illness (e.g., fever, headache, runny nose, extreme fatigue, and cough, sore throat, muscle aches).
- **Keep your children home until they are fully recovered** from the illness and are no longer significantly fatigued or in need of extra sleep and have significantly reduced respiratory symptoms. A normal temperature in the morning does not indicate the end of fever or illness. It is not unusual for fever to be absent in the early morning hours but appear (or reappear) in the afternoon or evening hours. A minimum of a full 24 hours of normal temperature – without Tylenol or other fever-reducing medication – is essential before a child returns to school.
- **Consult with your child's physician** should you have questions regarding EV-D68 symptoms, prevention and treatment of illness in your family. Symptoms of the EV-D68 virus should be reported immediately to your child's physician.
- **Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms – and particularly fever –** without first speaking to your doctor because of the risk of Reye's syndrome, a rare but potentially fatal disease.

If students, parents and staff members follow the above guidelines and collaborate in teaching children effective prevention strategies, we may succeed in decreasing the spread of EV-D68 within the school community.

Sincerely,

Patricia Libero
Principal

Cynthia Kelly, RN
School Nurse

Andrea L. Boissevain,
Director of Health Stratford