

October 8, 2014

To: School Administrators, Teachers, and Daycare providers.

As your school prepares for cold and flu season, please remember that the Contra Costa Public Health is available to answer questions, provide information and support your efforts to protect students and staff from getting ill.

One of the most important ways that you can help is to encourage staff, students and families to **get their flu vaccine as soon as possible**. Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

We also hope you will promote **frequent hand washing with soap and water** at your school, and teach younger children how to do a good job. We have included links to hand-washing signage that you can post in hallways, bathrooms, classrooms and the lunch room.

We are counting on you to **let us know when an unusual number of students in a class get sick with a respiratory illness OR have vomiting or diarrhea**. We can provide advice about when to send notifications to families, how long children should stay home from class and how to help people who were potentially exposed to a disease.

Many of you have questions and concerns about Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68), the respiratory illness affecting children across the country. We do anticipate EV-D68 cases in Contra Costa County, and are working with local hospitals and providers to test people hospitalized with serious respiratory infections. EV-D68 is concerning because it can be serious for certain people, particularly children with asthma or other respiratory conditions.

There are more than 100 types of enteroviruses, and they are very common in children. This enterovirus, EV-D68, is not new – it was first identified in 1962 – and it mostly causes symptoms that are similar to those of a cold or flu, such as cough, sneezing, runny nose, body aches, or fever. Many children infected this year by EV-D68, however, do NOT have a fever.

EV-D68 can spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or contaminates a surface with respiratory secretions. It can also spread through contact with stool (poop). Measures we can all take to stay healthy include:

- Avoid touching the face (nose, mouth and eyes) with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Encourage everyone to cover their coughs and sneezes.
- **Wash frequently with soap and water.** Alcohol-based hand cleaners **do not** kill enteroviruses.
- Clean often-touched surfaces, such as toys and door handles, especially if someone is sick. Disinfect them with a diluted bleach solution (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon water) or another EPA-approved disinfecting product that indicates use for non-enveloped viruses (such as norovirus).

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES:

The Contra Costa Public Health Communicable Disease Programs can be reached Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 925-313-6740 (phone) or 925-313-6465 (fax).

More information may be found at cchealth.org/enterovirus/ or cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/ev-d68.html

- ✓ EV-D68 Prevention Infographic Poster: cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html (English | Spanish)
- ✓ EV-D68 Fact Sheet: (English | Spanish)
- ✓ Cough Etiquette: eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-789ML.pdf
- ✓ Disinfectants for enteroviruses: epa.gov/oppad001/list_g_norovirus.pdf
- ✓ Handwashing: cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html

