

9/15/14

To Parents and Guardians at Salida School District,

As many of you have heard, there has been an increased amount of respiratory illness in Colorado, some of which may be due to the Enterovirus 68 (EV-D68). According to the Centers for Disease Control, infants, children, and teenagers are more likely to get infected and become sick. That's because they do not yet have immunity (protection) from previous exposures to the virus. Many infections will be mild; however, children with existing respiratory conditions (such as asthma) may experience more severe symptoms. Approximately 70% of children who have had serious illness with EV-D68 have been known asthmatics. This virus, like influenza, RSV and many other respiratory viruses, can serve as a trigger for asthma episodes.

There is still much to learn about EV-D68, but we want to assure you that the Salida School District will stay in contact with Chaffee County Public Health for the latest information and advice on how we can help prevent the spread of EV-D68 and other respiratory illnesses in our school and community. We are now entering the cold and flu season, so everyone needs to be vigilant about practicing prevention, such as hand washing and other good hygiene measures, regardless of what the circulating viruses may be.

What can you do to help your student and family stay healthy?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (kissing, hugging, sharing cups or eating utensils).
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds to help protect yourself from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid shaking hands and “fist bumps” (sometimes children may wipe their noses on the back of their hands).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, as germs on your hands may enter through these portals.
- If your child has asthma, be sure your school has a copy of his/her current management plan and that your child is taking medication according to the plan.
- While there is no vaccine for EV D68, there is one for Influenza. Flu season will be here soon, so get your flu shot!

If you suspect your child has a respiratory illness and they are having trouble breathing, consult with your child’s doctor for further evaluation. If you have a child with asthma and suspect a respiratory illness, be sure to contact his or her doctor immediately for instruction and appropriate management.

We strive to work together with our families to create a safe and healthy environment at our school. You can help by teaching your children the above guidelines and by modeling those healthy habits for them every day. Thank you for joining us in this effort.

Sincerely,

Salida School District Nurses