

Date: Friday, September 23, 2016

To: All Central Zone Physicians and Emergency Departments

From: Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Medical Officer of Health – Central Zone

At this time of year, we typically start to see more respiratory illnesses in the community. Current respiratory virus surveillance indicates a predominance of rhino/enterovirus. Influenza virus activity is low, with a few early season outbreaks identified.

A small number of children with paralysis linked to Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) have been recently reported in AB and BC. EV-D68 cases have also been reported in Ontario.

EV-D68 causes a spectrum of illnesses. Although most typically causing mild self-limiting respiratory illness, it may cause more severe symptoms, particularly in children aged <5 and those with a history of asthma. A smaller number of EV-D68 infected individuals may develop acute flaccid paralysis (AFP).

Actions:

1. **Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP)** is a notifiable disease (Notifiable Disease Guideline for AFP at www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Guidelines-Acute-Flaccid-Paralysis-AFP-2011.pdf). **Please report cases to the local Medical Officer of Health (MOH) at 403-356-6430.**
2. **Severe Respiratory Illness** (e.g. ARDS with no identified etiologic agent within 72 hours of admission) is a notifiable disease (Notifiable Disease Guideline for Severe Respiratory Illness at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Guidelines-Severe-Respiratory-Illness-2011.pdf>). Please report cases to the MOH.
3. Please also report unusual presentations or clusters of severe respiratory disease.
4. For laboratory testing of severe respiratory illness suspected to be due to enteroviruses please contact your local provincial lab virologist on call at
Edmonton Site – Phone: 780-407-7121 (ask for the Virologist-on-Call)
Calgary Site – Phone: 403-944-1200 (ask for the Virologist-on-Call)
Please refer to Alberta Provincial Lab Bulletins - Update EV testing at http://www.provlab.ab.ca/LabBulletin2015/wf_lab_bulletin_provlab_update_enterovirus_testing_strategy.pdf.
Testing patients with mild illness or outside of late summer/early fall season is of limited clinical utility.
5. Infection prevention and control - routine, droplet and contact precautions are recommended for seasonal respiratory viruses.