

Communicable Disease Advisory: Respiratory Virus Update

From the Office of the Medical Officer of Health

September 23, 2016

Context:

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 Alberta and British Columbia. EV-D68 cases have also been reported in Ontario.

Clinical symptoms:

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 less than 5 years old and those with a history of asthma. A smaller number of EV-D68 infected individuals may develop acute flaccid paralysis (AFP).

Actions:

1. **AFP** is a notifiable disease. Please report cases to the medical officer of health (MOH) at **780-433-3940**. (Notifiable Disease Guideline for AFP at www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Guidelines-Acute-Flaccid-Paralysis-AFP-2011.pdf).
2. **Severe Respiratory Illness** (e.g. Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome with no identified etiologic agent within 72 hours of admission) is a notifiable disease. Please report cases to the MOH. (Notifiable Disease Guideline for Severe Respiratory Illness at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Guidelines-Severe-Respiratory-Illness-2011.pdf>).
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 the Provincial Lab virologist on call at: **780-407-7121**. Testing patients with mild illness or outside of late summer/early fall season is of limited clinical utility. Please refer to Alberta Provincial Lab Bulletins - Update enterovirus testing at http://www.provlab.ab.ca/LabBulletin2015/wf_lab_bulletin_provlab_update_enterovirus_testing_strategy.pdf).
5. Infection prevention and control: Routine, droplet and contact precautions are recommended for seasonal respiratory viruses.

Medical Officer of Health advisories and alerts are posted at:
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/ezmoh.aspx> and
www.albertahealthservices.ca/7082.aspx.