

DATE: September 26, 2016
TO: All North Zone Physicians
From: NZ Medical Officers of Health (MOHs)
RE: Respiratory virus update

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 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. **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
 - 1-855-513-7530 - CDC Intake during regular business hours, or
 - 1-800-732-8981 - Public Health On Call after hours and on weekends.
2. **Severe Respiratory Illness** (eg 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.

This memo has been posted on the AHS-MOH webpage. Thank you.