

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kids with Asthma at Greatest Risk from EV-D68

Toronto – Parents of children with asthma should ensure that their asthma is well controlled to avoid potential complications from contact with the respiratory virus EV-D68, the Ontario Lung Association said today. Cases of the rare enterovirus have been confirmed in Alberta and are suspected at a hospital in Windsor. The patients are mostly children and young teens.

“Most of the patients being hospitalized with acute symptoms associated with the respiratory enterovirus are children with asthma,” said Dr. Sharon Dell, a respirologist at Toronto’s Sick Kids Hospital.

“I strongly advise parents to closely monitor their child’s asthma to ensure that it is under control. Make sure they are taking their controller medication and following their asthma management plan. If you suspect that your child’s asthma is not well controlled, see your health-care provider.”

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory symptoms, similar to other viral infections. Symptoms can include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, fever and body aches.

Typical of viral infections, it spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes or touches something. Younger people are generally more likely to get this type of infection because they are less likely to have developed resistance to the infection from a past exposure.

Follow the usual infection prevention measures:

- Wash hands regularly especially when in public or when you are with a person who is sick. Use plenty of soapy water and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If there is no easy access to a sink, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face before washing your hands.
- Clean common areas of your home often - e.g., doorknobs, counters, computers.
- To reduce exposure to viruses, avoid crowded places and people who are sick.
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve if you don’t have a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away right after use and wash your hands.
- Get the flu shot this fall.

Although there is no specific treatment for EV-D68, see your health care provider if you have any concerns. If you have a lung condition, be extra diligent in managing it well. Avoid your triggers and take your medicines as prescribed. Follow a written action plan from your health-care provider. An action plan can help you decide:

1. What steps to take when your condition is under control
2. What steps to take when there are changes to your symptoms

If your symptoms are getting out of control, contact your health-care provider or get to an emergency department.

For more information about how to keep your child's asthma under control, speak to one of the certified respiratory educators at The Lung Association Lung Health Information Line 1-888-344-LUNG (5864), visit www.on.lung.ca or email info@on.lung.ca.

About the Ontario Lung Association

The Lung Association is a registered charity that assists, educates and empowers individuals living with or caring for others with lung disease. The Lung Association provides programs and services to patients and health-care providers, invests in lung research and campaigns for improved policies on lung health. Information about lung health issues is available through the Lung Health Information Line 1-888-344-LUNG (5864) or at info@on.lung.ca.

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