



Joint Council of Allergy,  
Asthma & Immunology

**ACAAI**  
American College  
of Allergy, Asthma  
& Immunology

## Enterovirus: What should I do to protect myself, and my children?

Fever and a runny nose. Sneezing and coughing. Body and muscle aches. Wheezing and difficulty breathing. For most of us, these are all signs and symptoms of a cold. But for some individuals – especially children with Asthma - they can be the signs of a far more serious and deadly condition: Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68).

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) and the Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (JCAAI) want to alert parents and guardians with children who have asthma or other respiratory problems that they should be particularly vigilant if their child demonstrates the signs and symptoms mentioned above.

If they do, parents or guardians are encouraged to take their child to his or her allergist for proper testing and treatment. To find a Board Certified allergist in your area, go to: [Find an Allergist](#)

Enterovirus can cause mild to severe respiratory illness, and has the potential to aggravate asthma and similar respiratory conditions. Infants, children, and teens are most susceptible to the disease. For most young people, the symptoms are similar and no more harmful than those of a common cold. However, for children with asthma the virus can trigger more severe symptoms.

Enterovirus started to appear in mid-August and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects that it will start to disappear by the winter. There have been a confirmed 691 cases of people with respiratory illness caused by the Enterovirus, tragically, including five deaths.

“We’ve seen quite a variety of symptoms from mild to severe,” said Michael Foggs, MD, President of the College. “Unfortunately, the most severe cases have been children with asthma or other respiratory problems that have been made worse by this infection. If your child seems to be struggling to breathe and their normal asthma medications aren’t working, get him or her to the emergency department as quickly as possible.”

Dr. Allen Meadows, President of the Joint Council said, “The good news is that the risk of developing more severe symptoms may be reduced if the patient’s asthma is well controlled. We encourage asthma patients to see their allergist to be sure that their asthma is well managed and they know what to do if they exhibit the classic EV symptoms.”

The College and Joint Council encourage parents and guardians of children with asthma to take special care to control their illness during this time by updating their asthma action plans, taking medications as directed, and getting a flu vaccine. Any child with symptoms, especially those with asthma, should coordinate with an allergist and immunologist (A/I) for optimal care.

“While similar to the common cold, the Enterovirus should not be taken lightly, said Dr. Foggs, “this disease can be especially troubling for patients with chronic or severe respiratory allergies and diseases - such as asthma – as it can exacerbate those symptoms and, in some cases, result in hospitalization for the patient. It’s important for patients with these conditions to consult with their allergist to make sure they have a proper prevention and treatment plan in place.”

Diagnosis of Enterovirus D68 can only be provided by specific lab tests on specimens from a person’s nose and throat. The CDC, Joint Council and the College all recommend testing for patients with severe respiratory illness, especially when the cause is unclear. There are no specific treatments for the virus. If your child is experiencing difficulty breathing or worsening symptoms of the virus, you should consult with an A/I physician for expert advice and care.

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An allergist is a physician who specializes in the diagnosis and [treatment of asthma](#) and other allergic diseases. The allergist is specially trained to identify the factors that trigger asthma or allergies. Allergists help people treat or prevent their allergy problems. After earning a medical degree, the allergist completes a three-year residency-training program in either internal medicine or pediatrics. Next the allergist completes two or three more years of study in the field of allergy and immunology. You can be certain that your doctor has met these requirements if he or she is certified by the American Board of Allergy and Immunology.

If you would like more information on the Allergy/Immunology specialty please contact the: [American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#)