

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

September 16, 2014

Dear Parent:

There have been reports in the news about a severe respiratory illness affecting children in various parts of the country. Although there have not yet been reports of this virus affecting children in Florida, there is the possibility that this illness will occur here. The first clusters of this illness, designated Enterovirus D68, this year have been in Missouri and Illinois with additional cases now being seen in other states.

This respiratory illness has affected children ranging in age from 6 weeks through 16 years, but this does not guarantee that this virus will not impact adults and the elderly. The illness has had much stronger effects on children who have underlying respiratory illness such as asthma or wheezing. A significant number of patients have been admitted to pediatric intensive care units for treatment.

It is important to note that there are no vaccines or specific treatments for this illness with supportive care being the treatment offered. Difficulty breathing without fever has been a major symptom of those being treated.

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County encourages all residents to practice healthy habits to avoid spreading illness. Protect your family from illnesses by following these steps:

- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth if your hands are unwashed
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Don't kiss, hug, or share food, drink, cups or eating utensils with someone who is sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, including toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick
- Stay home from work or school when sick so you don't get other people sick
- If your child has asthma, be sure they follow their treatment regimens and contact their healthcare provider if there are any problems

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County advises taking certain precautions listed above to prevent and curtail the spread of respiratory diseases and to seek medical care if a member of your family has symptoms of respiratory illness or distress.

Sincerely,

Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD
Administrator/Health Officer
Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County