



Friday, October 24, 2014

Dear MNPS Parents,

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and the Metro Public Health Department have been in communication today after hearing of the death of one of our students that attends Haynes Middle School. There was concern that this death could be from an Enterovirus. The Health Department let us know the child had a preliminary test suggesting Enterovirus or possibly another respiratory virus. The Health Department has not received a confirmation yet because specific testing is pending.

This death is a tragic reminder that cold and flu season is here. Enterovirus is a respiratory virus that most often results in symptoms of a common cold, such as coughing, sneezing and fever. Enterovirus causes a simple cold for most of us, but it can lead to serious illness and even death for a child with asthma.

This year, a specific type of Enterovirus known as EV-D68 has been circulating across the country. While it has not yet been confirmed in Middle Tennessee, it has been a cause of severe illness in children with asthma in some areas. But it's important to know that Enterovirus D68 is not the only virus that can cause a cold for a majority of people, and serious problems for some children.

Cold and flu viruses spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches a surface that is then touched by others.

The Metro Public Health Department wants to remind all parents that it is very important to take steps to stop the spread of germs whether they are from Enterovirus, influenza or other respiratory viruses that are common this time of year.

Everyone, including school children should do the following:

- stay home when they are ill,
- avoid close contact with sick people,
- cover their cough,
- wash their hands often with soap and water,
- avoid touching their face with unwashed hands.

It is also important that children with asthma are prepared. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following:

- Discuss and update your [asthma action plan](#) with your primary care provider.
- Take your prescribed asthma medications as directed, especially long term control medication(s).
- Be sure to keep your reliever medication with you.
- Get a flu vaccine.
- If you develop new or worsening asthma symptoms, follow the steps of your asthma action plan. If your symptoms do not go away, call your doctor right away.

- Parents should make sure the child's caregiver and/or teacher is aware of his/her condition, and that they know how to help if the child experiences any symptoms related to asthma.

Please know that Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Health Department are working together closely and we will keep you informed as we know additional information.

Included at the below link is a list of Frequently Asked Questions about Enterovirus:

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/ev-d68.html>

We also encourage you to visit this link to the CDC's website to view an infographic about prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html>

We understand you may have concerns and suggest contacting your pediatrician if you have questions specific to your family.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jesse B. Register, Ed.D.
Director of Metro Nashville Public Schools



Dr. William S. Paul, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.
Director, Metro Public Health Department