

# HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR CHILD HAS ENTEROVIRUS

## What are the symptoms?

There are hundreds of respiratory viruses, so it is difficult to know when a child develops symptoms whether or not it is Enterovirus D68. The CDC advises parents to focus on severity of symptoms rather than whether a child has a particular virus.

Notably, Enterovirus D68 usually presents without a fever. The most common symptoms are a persistent cough and runny nose. Parents should seek medical attention if their child starts wheezing or has trouble breathing, especially if they have a history of asthma or other respiratory problems.

Rare symptoms might include weakness or paralysis in the arms, legs or facial muscles, though health authorities have not established a definitive link between these warning signs and the virus. Any child with these symptoms should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.

## How can I prevent my child from getting the virus?

Hand washing is the first line of defense against any illness, according to the CDC. Children should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time.

But Dr. Daniel Feikin, the epidemiology branch chief in the Division of Viral Diseases at the CDC said there is really no way to contain this or any respiratory virus.

“There is no vaccine. There is not really a lot you can do to prevent circulation,” Feikin said. “You can try to prevent at an individual level, but you cannot really stop it at a population level.”

## How does it spread?

Enterovirus is a respiratory illness spread by saliva and mucus. When someone infected by the virus coughs, sneezes or touches a surface, they leave their germs behind, Feikin said.

This is why regular hand washing — and frequently wiping down surfaces with soap or bleach disinfectants — may help keep the illness from spreading quickly.