

Enterococcus Virus

A virus called Enterococcus D68 has led to the hospitalization of many children who have contracted this illness. Many have asked how this will impact the Wesleyan campus.

Enterococcus was first identified in California in 1962. Until this recent outbreak, infections have been isolated to small clusters of patients.

We are currently seeing this virus affecting children within the ages of 6 months to 16 years with the majority of cases in the 4-5 year range. The infection may present as a mild cold but could lead to respiratory distress with the need for hospitalization.

Fever is not a prominent symptom with only 25-30% of cases experiencing it.

Patients with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma tend to be sicker with this virus.

It usually starts the same as any other viral respiratory illnesses with runny nose, cough, body aches etc.

There is no vaccine for this. Antibiotics do not help (as this is a virus)

The treatment is supportive only. This includes rest, hydration, and Tylenol for the mild cases.

If a patient experiences more severe symptoms such as wheezing (which may occur in patients without asthma), trouble breathing, shortness of breath, labored breathing, they should be evaluated promptly.

Prevention includes hand washing (at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer), covering the mouth with either a tissue or the crook of the elbow when coughing or sneezing, and not sharing drinks, straws utensils with potentially infected people.

There have been documented cases in Connecticut, but this is not a problem on college campuses. We will continue to monitor the situation along with our State Health Department.

As with any novel infection or in this case, a known infection that appears to be spreading, panic does not help at all.

Prevention, monitoring of symptoms and seeking medical care if one is concerned that they have this illness is the best course.

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