

OCTOBER 2014

## Helping prevent EV-D68 infection

**B**y now you have probably heard about the respiratory infection that is affecting children in several states. It is thought to be caused by a virus called “Enterovirus 68” or EV-D68.

Your child’s health and safety are primary concerns at St. Jude. The staff is taking extra precautions to decrease the chances of this virus spreading here, but they need your help.

EV-D68 is not a new virus, but before now, it did not usually occur in children. The symptoms of EV-D68 infection include fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing and body aches. Children with the virus might not show all of these symptoms. In fact, most children who are infected with EV-D68 do not get a fever. EV-D68 causes some people, especially those with asthma, to have severe symptoms including trouble breathing and wheezing. Often, people who have these severe symptoms are admitted to a hospital, some to an Intensive Care Unit.

EV-D68 spreads from one person to the next when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and another person comes in contact with the infected nasal mucous or phlegm. The virus spreads not only through direct contact, but also when you touch a surface that contains traces of infected nasal mucous or phlegm and then touch your nose or mouth.

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent EV-D68 infection and no treatment for the virus. Supportive care can be used, such as medicines that will treat fevers and body aches. While these supportive measures might help, the goal is to avoid EV-D68 infection.

### Things you can do to help prevent EV-D68 infection

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. This applies to parents and children. Keeping hands clean is the best way to prevent the spread of any infection, including EV-D68. You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water works much better on this virus than alcohol-based hand

cleaners. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid kissing, hugging or sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Avoid having your child around people who are sick with fever and respiratory symptoms.
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched often, such as toys, doorknobs, light switches, and telephones.
- Family members and visitors who have symptoms, such as runny nose, cough, fever, and body aches, should avoid coming to the hospital if at all possible. If you are your child’s main caregiver and you have symptoms, wear a mask and wash your hands often.

### What St. Jude is doing to help prevent infection

- The St. Jude staff is closely following the spread of EV-D68 in other regions. If the virus appears at St. Jude, the staff will be prepared.
- We have asked our doctors and nurses to stay home if they have EV-D68 symptoms and to go to

their doctors right away.

- The staff will be asking each patient about respiratory illness symptoms. Fever by itself does not mean a person has the EV-D68 infection. But, always call your St. Jude doctor or clinic if your child has a fever. A fever is an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees F (38.0 degrees C) or higher.
- St. Jude plans to increase the number of hygiene stations in the hospital and housing. These stations will have face masks and alcohol-based hand cleaners. Although these cleaners are not as effective as washing your hands with soap and water, use this method if you cannot get to a sink.

The staff will keep you up to date on any important new information that is learned about EV-D68 infection. If you have questions, please ask your child’s doctor or nurse. You can also visit the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for updates.

Thank you for working with the staff to protect the health and safety of all St. Jude patients and families.

## Preparing for Halloween festivities

It’s almost that time of year again—when the halls of St. Jude are transformed into a trick-or-treating wonderland for patients and siblings. The excitement surrounding Halloween has grown each year as the number of children and staff taking part in the hospital’s Trick-or-Treat event has increased.

Because of the event’s growth, a group of employees from many different departments looked at ways to continue to make the event fun and enjoyable for everyone. Last year’s changes helped improve crowd control, safety and security.

This year’s Trick-or-Treat festivities for patients and siblings will be held Friday, October 31, from noon to 2 p.m. Hospital staff members will visit the rooms of inpatients in two shifts from 10 a.m. to noon for reverse trick-or-treating.

Here are some key things to

remember for this year’s Halloween celebration:

- All children and families planning to trick-or-treat that day must first stop by the new Halloween Registration tent in the parking lot outside of the Chili’s Care Center to pick up a candy bag and a map of the trick-or-treat route.
- When registering, please provide your child’s medical record number. A medical record number is required to receive a bag and take part in the event.
- To ensure the safety and security of all patients and families, please remember that only patients on active treatment and their siblings are invited to take part in the trick-or-treat festivities.
- Please remember not to bring or invite outside friends or family members because of the risk of infection and for safety reasons.





# Talking about Medicines

## Changes for mercaptopurine dosing

By Cheri Wilkerson, PharmD, Pharmacy Services, and Lindsey DeLoach, Pharmacy student

Mercaptopurine (6-MP) is an anticancer medicine used to treat acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). This drug has been available as a tablet or a liquid made by the pharmacy. Starting in October, a new liquid mercaptopurine will be used at St. Jude. This new liquid form is also called Purixan™. Just like the current liquid, Purixan™ works to prevent the growth of cancer cells.

### What you need to know about this change

- The new liquid, Purixan™, is pink to brown in color with a raspberry taste.
- This new liquid is still the same medicine your child has been taking.
- The new liquid is a stronger strength than the current liquid form.
- Shake the bottle for at least 30 seconds before filling the oral syringe with the correct dose.
- Discard any unused portion after the expiration date on the medicine label.
- Store this medicine at room temperature.
- Read directions very carefully on the medicine label. The same dose will require a **smaller** amount of liquid in the oral syringe than what you have been giving because this new liquid formula is a stronger strength.

Continue to follow all safe handling instructions for this medicine. If you have questions, please talk to your child's pharmacist or call the St. Jude Pharmacy at 1-866-820-2442.

## Renovations in progress at Tri Delta Place

Renovations have begun on Tri Delta Place, formerly called the Memphis Grizzlies House. This short-stay housing facility was built in 2004, and after 10 years it's time to freshen up the first floor common areas, including the registration area, dining room, family room, teen area, toddler area and library.

The renovations will also recognize the facility's new partner Delta Delta Delta Fraternity, which recently committed to raising \$60 million in 10 years for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. This is

the largest commitment of any St. Jude partner.

Renovations will be ongoing through January 15. Patients and their families will continue to use the main entrance until late December or early January. The three main areas will be closed in phases. Families staying at Tri Delta Place will need to watch for signs about what is open and which entrance to use.

The staff thanks you in advance for your patience as they work to improve this facility for all St. Jude patient families.



## St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

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For the latest details on upcoming events, see the bulletin board in the Patient Care Center lobby near Patient Registration.

*St. Jude Parents* is published on the first of each month by Patient Education and Bio-medical Communications. Your questions and comments are important to us. **We want to print advice and tips from St. Jude parents to other St. Jude parents.**

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