

New test to cause spike in illness cases in kids

October 14 2014, by Mike Stobbe

(AP)—Health officials say a national wave of severe respiratory illnesses caused by an unusual virus is about to start looking a whole lot bigger, but that's because a new test will be speeding through a backlog of cases.

Starting Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is using a new, faster test—which is expected to help the agency test four or five times more specimens per day that it has been.

The test checks for [enterovirus 68](#), which since August has been fingered as the cause of hundreds of severe, asthma-like illnesses in children—some so severe they needed a breathing machine. The virus is being investigated as a cause of at least 6 deaths.

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