



RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

FACT SHEET

What is RSV?

RSV is a common respiratory illness of childhood. The CDC reports that most children have been infected by age 2.

How would I know if my child has RSV?

RSV infections are most common in children under 2 years of age. Upper respiratory tract infections, such as the common cold, are often the result of infection. Some children can develop lower respiratory tract infections, which can lead to pneumonia-like symptoms and croup.

How do you get RSV?

You can become infected by breathing in viral particles transmitted into the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs. You can also contract RSV from an infected person who hasn't washed their hands after sneezing or coughing into them. The RSV virus can also be transmitted by touching your eyes or mouth prior to washing your hands after touching a contaminated surface.

How can I prevent RSV?

Unfortunately, it is very easy to contract RSV, especially if you have children in day care or other childcare settings. Common prevention strategies include:

- **Washing your hands well** to prevent infection and reduce possible spread.
- **Using a disposable tissue** to blow your nose or cover coughs/sneezes instead of handkerchiefs.
- **Always cover your mouth** when you cough or sneeze and avoid touching anything until you thoroughly wash your hands.

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Can RSV be treated?

Most often, RSV is not treated. In severe cases, physicians may prescribe medications for infants/children who are hospitalized. For most people, treatment includes plenty of rest, fluids, and fever reducing medications. Do NOT give aspirin to children under 18 years of age. Please consult with your child's pediatrician for any questions regarding medications or treatment. If children appear very ill or do not seem to be responding to fluids or bed rest, contact your healthcare provider immediately for recommendations, as some RSV infections can become severe.

Should my child or I stay home if we have an RSV infection?

To prevent the spread of illness, adults and children should stay home from work, school, and/or childcare when exhibiting a fever or upper respiratory symptoms, such as a cough. If sick, please keep yourself and/or your children away from individuals who are immunocompromised, have underlying medical conditions, or are 60+ years of age. RSV infections in immunocompromised and/or older adults can result in severe disease and possible death.

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