



Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common viral infection that most children will have at least once by 2 years of age. It is most common in the winter and early spring months.

If you think your child has RSV:

- Tell your childcare provider.
- Keep your child home from childcare until fever is gone (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine) and your child is healthy enough for routine activities.
- **Do not give aspirin or salicylate-containing medicines to anyone under 18 years of age.**

For more information, call Hennepin County Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

Parent/Guardian information

Symptoms

Your child may have a cough, watery eyes, runny nose or stuffiness, or sneezing. Symptoms may last for 7 days.

Children with severe RSV may wheeze and/or have lung congestion. RSV can be serious for premature babies and people with heart, lung, or immune system problems.

If your child is infected, it may take 2 to 8 days (most commonly 4 to 6 days) for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By coughing or sneezing
- By touching contaminated hands, objects, or surfaces

Contagious period

A few days before and for 3 to 8 days after symptoms start. Some infants can spread RSV for up to 4 weeks.

Call your health care provider

- If anyone in your home has symptoms. Your doctor may want to test for the virus.
- Antibiotics do not work for illnesses caused by viruses, including RSV.

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Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the mouth or nose. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Do not share anything that goes in the mouth, such as drinking cups, straws, and water bottles.
- Clean and disinfect anything that comes into contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.
- Do not expose your child to second-hand tobacco smoke. Smoke increases the risk for serious respiratory infections and middle ear infections.

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