



Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Key Facts about RSV

- ➔ Most children will have at least one RSV infection by the age of two.
- ➔ RSV infects the lungs and airways. It causes colds and is the most common cause of bronchiolitis, an inflammation of the small airways in the lung, and pneumonia in young infants and toddlers.
- ➔ Children are more likely catch RSV from November to April when the virus is most active.
- ➔ RSV typically causes mild symptoms that last a few days and would not require medical attention.
- ➔ Some people with RSV infection, especially infants younger than six months of age and older adults, may need to be hospitalized if they are having trouble breathing or are dehydrated.

What are the signs and symptoms of RSV?

Children with RSV may experience symptoms like a cold or flu, including:

- Coughing
- A runny nose
- Fever
- Wheezing
- A decrease in appetite and energy
- Irritability

Because RSV is a virus, antibiotics will not help your child get better faster. In most cases, you can take care of your child at home as long as they are breathing comfortably, their skin does not look blue and they are drinking and urinating as usual.

How can I treat my child with RSV?

- Use over-the-counter acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and pain. Do not give ibuprofen to babies under six months old without first speaking to your health care provider. Never give aspirin to children.
- Offer plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. If your baby is having trouble drinking, try to clear nasal congestion with a bulb syringe or saline nose drops.
- A lukewarm bath or wet face cloth may help your child feel more comfortable. Avoid cold baths because they can make your child shiver, raising their temperature.
- Dress your child in light clothing. If your child starts to shiver, add warmer clothing and remove them when the shivering stops.
- Consult your health care provider before giving your child non-prescription cold medicines or if you have concerns about your child's symptoms.

When should I call a doctor or go to an emergency department?

Go to an emergency department if your child:

- Has trouble breathing, pale skin, lips that look white or blue, asthma or wheezing.
- Is younger than three months old and has any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever and is very sleepy or difficult to wake
 - Repeated vomiting and unable to keep any liquids down for eight hours or more
 - Vomiting or diarrhea containing a large amount of blood
 - Signs of dehydration with dry mouth or no urination for eight hours or more

How can I protect my child from RSV?

- Keep your child at home if they are sick and avoid sick relatives
- Clean surfaces in your home that are touched often
- Wash your hands and your child's hands often
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Breastfeed your baby, if possible
- Avoid cigarette smoke