



# What You Should Know About **RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)**

## What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)?

RSV, is a virus causing respiratory illness in young children that usually causes cold-like symptoms. It is the most frequent cause of lower respiratory infections, such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia, in infants.

## How is RSV spread?

RSV is transmitted similar to the cold/flu; by respiratory droplets either directly through the air or indirectly by hands, nose, and/or mouth.

## Who is at risk?

Almost all children are infected by 2 years of age. However, RSV in premature and very young infants (under 6 months) is especially dangerous. Elderly persons and/or young children with weakened immune systems or chronic lung or heart conditions are also at risk for developing complications.

For more information about RSV, visit [www.cdc.gov/rsv](http://www.cdc.gov/rsv).



## What are the signs and symptoms of RSV?

Symptoms usually develop between 2 and 8 days of exposure. Most children recover in 8 to 15 days.

- Runny nose
- Fever (101 degrees or higher)
- Cough (may progress to wheezing)
- Irritability
- Decreased activity
- Decreased appetite
- Difficulty breathing

## How to recognize severe RSV.

- 1 Coughing or wheezing that does not stop.
- 2 A blueish color around the mouth or fingernails.
- 3 Nostrils flaring and/or caved-in chest when breathing.
- 4 A fever greater than 101 degrees.

*If your child is having difficulty breathing, not drinking enough fluids, or experiencing worsening symptoms, see your child's medical provider right away.*

For more information about RSV, visit [www.cdc.gov/rsv](http://www.cdc.gov/rsv).



## How to help prevent the spread of RSV

Follow these easy steps to help reduce the spread of RSV.

**1**

**Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and help children do the same.

**2**

**Cover coughs and sneezes.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve. Dispose of tissues properly. Teach children to do the same.

**3**

**Clean and disinfect surfaces.** Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that people touch frequently (toys, doorknobs, etc.).

**4**

**Avoid close contact with sick people.** Avoid close contact, such as kissing, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who have cold-like symptoms.

**5**

**Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work/school, and avoid public areas when you are sick.

For more information about RSV, visit [www.cdc.gov/rsv](http://www.cdc.gov/rsv).



### References

*American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Edition, pages 147-148*

*Centers for Diseases Control & Prevention, Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV) website*