

# RSV Facts

## Protect Your Child



**Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)** infection is a common respiratory illness caused by a virus. It typically occurs during the fall and winter.

Anyone can be infected. Infants and young children are at higher risk for serious illness, especially if they are:

- Very young infants (under 6 months).
- Premature.
- Children with certain heart conditions, chronic lung disease, or neuromuscular disorders.
- Children with a weakened immune system.
- Children who have trouble swallowing or clearing mucus from their lungs.

RSV can look like a cold and may include:

- Fever – temperature of 100.4 or higher.
- Congestion.
- Cough – which may turn into wheezing.
- Sneezing or runny nose.
- Decreased appetite.
- In infants under 6 months- fussiness or a decrease in activity or alertness.

Call Your Health Care Provider Right Away if the Child is:

- Having trouble breathing:
  - Grunting with each breath.
  - Widening nostrils with each breath.
  - Wheezing.
  - Belly breathing or chest looks caved in.
- Not drinking enough fluids – in infants, fewer than 1 wet diaper every 8 hours.
- Showing skin color changes – the skin may look blue or grey or have color changes to lips, tongue, gums, or around the eyes.
- Showing less activity or alertness.

How Can You Protect a Child from RSV?

- Wash your hands and the child's hands often! Scrub with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and supervise children under the age of 5 years.
- Help children avoid touching their face with unwashed hands
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue if you cough or sneeze (then throw the tissue away) or encourage children to cover their mouth and nose with their elbow and sneeze/cough into their sleeve.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick – like hugging, kissing, sharing cups, or utensils.
- Stay home if you are sick and keep your child home if they are sick.
- Avoid crowds. Avoid being around others with colds.
- Wear a face mask (if two years of age or older) if you are leaving home and will be indoors with other people.
- Disinfect toys and surfaces in your home regularly.

Other Ways to Help Prevent RSV

- Vaccinate. All family members and children should be up to date with vaccinations for influenza, COVID, and Tdap (to protect against whooping cough).
- Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Feed your baby breast milk.

More RSV Information:



New York State Department of Health  
Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV)  
([ny.gov](https://www.ny.gov))



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
Symptoms and Care of RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) | CDC



American Academy of Pediatrics:  
RSV: When It's More Than Just a Cold –  
[HealthyChildren.org](https://www.HealthyChildren.org)



American Academy of Pediatrics:  
Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care –  
[HealthyChildren.org](https://www.HealthyChildren.org)



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