

RSV



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RSV

Respiratory Syncytial Virus
...Can be more serious than a cold



Reducing the risk of RSV infection
Information for Parents

What is RSV?

RSV stands for Respiratory Syncytial Virus. RSV is a very common virus in infancy and early childhood. Almost all children will have been infected with RSV by the age of 2-3 years.¹⁻³

RSV infections tend to happen from Fall to Spring in temperate climates such as Canada, but RSV season may vary by region.¹ It is best to ask your doctor when RSV occurs in your local area.

Is your baby at risk of getting very sick from RSV?

In many children, RSV causes symptoms similar to the common cold.³ But in certain cases, most often in **premature babies (preemies)** and in children less than 2 years old with **certain lung conditions** or **congenital heart disease**, RSV can cause an infection of the lungs. When this happens, babies can then become very sick and may require hospitalization.¹⁻³ RSV can cause pneumonia and is the most important cause of bronchiolitis during the first year of life.^{1,2}

Premature babies (preemies)

Your baby is at greater risk of RSV if he or she was born prematurely, before 33 weeks of pregnancy, and is less than 6 months old at the start of RSV season.¹

Bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD)

Bronchopulmonary dysplasia occurs most commonly in preterm infants who received long-term mechanical ventilation and high oxygen concentrations.⁴

Congenital heart disease

There are several different types of congenital heart disease (CHD). Some types of CHD can increase the risk of developing a serious form of RSV disease. If your baby has congenital heart disease (CHD), ask your doctor for more specific information.^{1,5}



What are the symptoms of RSV?

The symptoms of RSV may be like a cold at first and can include:

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Other cold-like symptoms^{1,3}

The symptoms of RSV may get worse after it gets into the lungs. These symptoms can include:

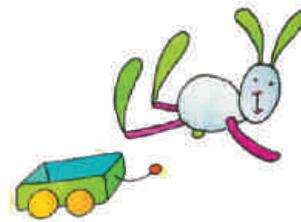
- Deeper and more frequent coughing
- Difficulty breathing, including wheezing (a whistling sound) and rapid breathing
- Blue lips or fingernails
- Dehydration
- Difficulty breast-feeding or bottle-feeding³

Is it easy to catch RSV?

Yes, it is easy to catch RSV.

- RSV is a very common virus that is spread by any physical contact such as touching, kissing or shaking hands with an infected person.^{1,6}
- The germs are also spread through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs.^{1,6}
- RSV can live for hours on a countertop or on a used tissue.¹
- RSV infection is very common in crowded living areas and daycare centres.^{1,6}

These are all reasons why you must be very careful and take steps to prevent your baby from being exposed to RSV.



Helpful steps to reduce the risk of RSV infection

- Wash hands with warm water and soap or alcohol hand rinse before touching your baby.¹
- If you have a cold or fever, gently hug instead of kissing your baby.⁶
- Keep anyone with cold symptoms or fever away from your baby.
- Try to keep your baby away from crowded places (such as daycare, malls, large family gatherings, etc.).^{1,6}
- Do not smoke around the baby. Ban smoking inside your house.¹

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What you need to remember

RSV is highly contagious. Following the suggestions in this brochure will help reduce the risk of your baby catching an RSV infection. If you have any questions about RSV, please consult your doctor or nurse.

For more information about RSV, please visit
www.RSVShield.ca

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