



UNDERSTANDING RSV AND HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD (RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS)

What are the symptoms?

RSV is a very contagious virus that can affect people of all ages. Most people have mild symptoms that are similar to the common cold. These include a stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, cough, mild headache and sometimes a fever. However, young infants and “high-risk” children are more likely to develop serious complications from RSV. In fact, RSV is the most common reason young infants develop infections of the lungs and breathing passages. It is also the most common reason young infants are hospitalized.

Who is “High-risk” for Severe RSV?

- Infants younger than 12 months of age.
- Infants born prematurely.
- Infants and children with chronic heart or lung problems.
- The elderly and adults with chronic heart or lung disease.
- Infants, children, and the elderly who are exposed to secondary smoke, such as cigarettes or cigars.

How does RSV Spread?

RSV passes from person to person like a cold virus. When someone with RSV sneezes or coughs, droplets travel through the air to other people. Germs also land on different things, such as a toy or a desk. When someone touches those germs, the RSV virus can enter their body when they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

More Serious Symptoms Include:

- Bad wheezing (a high-pitched noise when breathing out)
- High fever
- Yellow, green or gray thick discharge from the nose
- Extreme tiredness
- Severe cough

Seek Immediate Medical Attention if your Child:

- Has difficulty breathing
- Is turning blue, especially on the lips or the fingernails

Prevention is Our Best Defense

- ✓ Teach everyone in the family to wash hands frequently and correctly. Always do so before touching your infant or high risk child.
- ✓ Try to limit your high-risk child’s close contact with people with runny noses or other illnesses.
- ✓ Wash toys, countertops, and other surfaces regularly.
- ✓ Don’t share silverware or drinking glasses.
- ✓ Don’t allow your high-risk child to be around any second hand smoke.
- ✓ Ask your Doctor about other ways to protect high-risk children.