

What to know about Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)



What is RSV?

RSV is a major cause of respiratory illness in young children. The virus infects the lungs and breathing passages and can cause breathing problems.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your **health care provider** if your child:

- develops a fever after having a cold or has a high fever
- has a cough or other symptoms that get worse
- is wheezing
- shows signs of dehydration, such as fewer wet diapers than usual

Get medical help right away if your child:

- has trouble breathing or very fast breathing
- is very drowsy
- has lips or fingernails that look blue

What does RSV look like?

Kids with RSV might have cold symptoms, such as:

- a stuffy or runny nose
- sore throat
- mild headache
- cough
- fever
- not eating or drinking well
- a general ill feeling

Sometimes, an RSV infection can lead to:

- wheezing (a whistling sound heard with breathing)
- bronchiolitis or pneumonia, especially in premature babies; infants younger than 1 year old; and kids with diseases that affect the lungs, heart, or immune system
- dehydration

How can I prevent RSV?

Protect your child from RSV by:

- avoiding close contact with sick people
- washing your hands often
- covering your sneezes and coughs
- avoiding touching your face
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- staying home when you're sick

