

What treatment is available?

Minor cases of RSV usually resolve within seven to ten days. If your child's symptoms are more severe, then treatment such as an oxygen mask/nose tube to help your child's breathing, medication for fever and fluid therapy may be given. A nasal gastric tube may be passed through the nose and into their stomach to help with feeding.

RSV is caused by a virus, so antibiotics will not help. However antibiotics may be given if your child develops a secondary bacterial infection.

If your child has mild RSV symptoms and are at home, here are some things you can and cannot do to help ease the symptoms:

Do:

- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if they have a high temperature and are uncomfortable.
- Try using saline nose drops from a pharmacy if your child's nose is blocked.
- Encourage fluids – try smaller feeds more often in babies, and give older children extra water or diluted fruit juice.

Do not:

- Smoke around your child – children who breathe in cigarette smoke have a higher risk of getting serious RSV infections.
- Try to lower your child's temperature by sponging them with cool water or taking off all their clothes.

Call 999 if:

- Your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises, long pauses in their breathing or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- Your child is having difficulty breathing – gasping, choking or not able to get words out
- Your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake
- Your child's lips or skin are turning very pale, blue or grey – on brown or black skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands
- Your child is under 5 years old and has a temperature below 36C

As a parent, you may know if your child seems seriously unwell and should trust your judgement.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshalls Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترسی‌پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کنند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se occupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式, 请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه الشارة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):

RSV is a common cause of coughs and colds. RSV infections usually get better by themselves, but can sometimes be serious for babies and older adults.

Who is at risk from RSV:

RSV infections are very common. Almost all children get them at least once before they are 2 years old.

They are not usually serious, but some babies and adults have a higher risk of getting seriously ill, particularly:

- Babies under 6 months.
- Young children who are born prematurely.
- Babies and children with a weakened immune system.
- Babies and children with long term lung or heart conditions.

In babies, RSV is a common cause of a type of chest infection called bronchiolitis. This can cause breathing problems and may need to be treated in hospital. RSV can also cause a serious lung infection (pneumonia) in babies.

How is RSV diagnosed?

A single swab (cotton bud) is inserted to the back of the nose and will be sent for testing if RSV is suspected. This will not hurt your child and confirmation of the infection will usually take a few hours.

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of an RSV infection usually start within a few days of getting infected. Most people only get cold like symptoms, such as:

- A runny or blocked nose.
- A cough.
- Sneezing.
- Tiredness.
- A high temperature, signs include your back or chest feeling hotter than usual, sweatiness and shivering (chills).

Babies with RSV may also be irritable and feed less than usual.

If RSV leads to a more serious infection (such as pneumonia or bronchiolitis) it may also cause:

- A cough that gets worse.
- Shortness of breath.
- Faster breathing or long gaps between breaths.
- Difficulty feeding (in babies) or loss of appetite.
- Noisy breathing (wheezing).

Cold like symptoms are very common in babies and children. They are not usually a sign of anything serious and should get better within a few days.

How to avoid catching and spreading RSV

RSV is spread in the coughs and sneezes of someone who has the virus. There are some things you can do to reduce your chances of getting it or spreading it to others, such as:

- Washing or wiping down toys and cleaning surfaces regularly.
- Not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Using disposable tissues and throwing them away as soon as you have used them. Wash hands after use.
- Trying to keep newborn babies away from anyone with a cold or the flu, especially if they were born prematurely or have serious health conditions.

How can I prevent RSV?

It is very hard to prevent your baby catching RSV, as it can be picked up through close contact or from touching their surroundings.

Preventing RSV in the hospital

Your child will be hospitalised in a cubicle (separate room) and all staff treating your child will wear aprons and gloves.

Will RSV have any long term effects on my child?

Most children recover well from RSV and do not have long term breathing problems. Some children who have had RSV can remain mildly wheezy at times for several months after the illness.