

# RSV

## Respiratory Syncytial Virus



### WHAT IS IT?

**RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)** is an RNA virus that commonly causes mild cold-like symptoms after entering the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth. It spreads easily through the air via droplets from an infected person. Typical transmission is 3-8 days, but is possible up to 4 weeks. More infections occur in cold months, but they can occur year round. RSV persists on hard surfaces contaminated with the droplets, so touching a surface then one's eyes, nose, or mouth can cause infection. Vaccine development research is underway, primarily for young infants.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- **~2.1M** outpatient visits; **235,000** hospitalizations; **14,000** deaths annually in U.S.
- **1-2 weeks** generally needed for recovery.
- **Serious complications** can occur in infants and elderly, e.g., pneumonia, inflammation of the lungs' small airways, dehydration. May require hospitalization.
- **Repeat RSV infections** are common.
- **CURRENT INCREASE** is speculated as due to the relaxation of COVID protections and lack of previous exposure. In October 2022, the [US CDC surveillance](#) revealed that some U.S. regions were nearing peak case levels.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Within about 5 days, infection leads to:



Runny nose



Decrease  
appetite



Coughing/  
Sneezing



Fever



Wheezing

### WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?

1. Ask ill persons to stay home and keep isolated from others as much as possible.
2. Clean and disinfect hard surfaces that may be contaminated with respiratory droplets from an infected person.
3. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.
4. Practice respiratory hygiene – covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
5. Care for cold-like symptoms as directed by medical professionals.
6. Seek medical attention if symptoms do not resolve within a week or two or become more serious.

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