

Have you heard of RSV?

RSV, or 'respiratory syncytial virus', can cause illnesses that affect breathing.¹

Here you can find out more about RSV, spot the signs of illness in your baby and how to help protect them.

RSV is a common contagious virus which can make babies ill. Nearly all will have been infected with RSV by 3 years of age.²

While most RSV cases are mild, all infants are potentially at risk of developing bronchiolitis or pneumonia from RSV – and we can't predict which infants could get seriously ill and end up in hospital.³⁻⁵ Bronchiolitis and pneumonia are respiratory conditions which can cause difficulty in breathing and may require care in hospital.^{3,6}

Read on to find out more about RSV and how to help protect your baby...



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Spot the signs of illness in your baby

RSV can look like many other illnesses. Some of the symptoms of illness could be:^{1,7}

-  Cold-like symptoms such as a blocked nose, a cough, or a fever
-  Loss of appetite in older children, or decreased feeding in babies
-  Wheezing
-  Decreased activity

If you have any concerns about the health of your infant, talk to your healthcare provider for more information

Although not common, sometimes symptoms can become severe quickly and more urgent help is required. The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the Royal Children's Hospital recommend that you call 000 if you notice that your child:^{1,7}

-  Is having severe difficulty breathing or is breathing very quickly
-  Is having trouble tolerating fluids, or has stopped passing urine
-  Is making a 'grunting' noise, or has blue-coloured lips or skin
-  Appears very unwell and lethargic

For more information on RSV talk to your healthcare professional



Help protect your baby

Severe RSV-related illness can affect family life and may leave parents feeling worried, overwhelmed and stressed.⁸ But there are steps you can take to help protect your baby and family.

Be aware that:

-  RSV occurs seasonally in most places (often from the winter months through to spring) and is easily spread⁹
-  RSV can survive on hard surfaces and toys for many hours. The virus can spread if an infant touches these surfaces and then touches their face¹⁰
-  RSV is easily spread through coughs, sneezes and close physical contact, like cuddles and kisses¹⁰
-  Research has shown that RSV is mostly spread to infants by older siblings or other children^{11,12}

Help prevent the spread of RSV by:

-  Frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds²
-  Coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow²
-  Disinfecting things like hard surfaces, toys and utensils²
-  Keeping your baby away from people who are sick²