

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common respiratory illness that most often affects children.

Most people who get RSV have mild, cold-like symptoms that go away in one to two weeks. However, RSV can make people very sick. Infants, older adults, and people with health conditions or weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness from RSV.

How does it spread?

You can get RSV when:



Someone who has RSV coughs or sneezes near you.

You have direct contact with a person who has RSV (such as kissing a child's face).

You touch objects that have the virus on them, then touch your face.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of RSV include:

- Runny nose
- Decreased appetite
- Coughing/sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing
- These **symptoms usually happen in stages** — not all at once.
- **Infants** can have other symptoms, such as irritability, decreased activity, or trouble breathing.

Symptoms begin 4-6 days after exposure.



Keep your child home from school or childcare if they have symptoms of RSV. Contact your school or childcare for guidance on when your child can return.

Test for COVID-19.



Make sure your child gets rest and drinks plenty of fluids. If your child has a fever, you can give them fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.



Call a healthcare provider or a nurse hotline if you are concerned about your child's symptoms. Many insurance plans and healthcare providers offer hotlines and telehealth visits. Your child may need medical attention if they are having difficulty breathing, are not drinking enough fluids, or have symptoms that are getting worse.

Call 911 or go to an emergency room if your child's symptoms become severe.

How can we prevent RSV?

Simple steps can reduce your risk of getting or spreading RSV and other viruses:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home as much as possible if you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Consider wearing a mask in crowded spaces.

Stay up to date on vaccines

RSV vaccines are available for older adults, young children, and people who are pregnant. Ask your healthcare provider if RSV vaccination is right for you.

Learn more at KitsapPublicHealth.org/vaccine