Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

RSV

Respiratory Syncytial Virus in Infants

The most common cause of lower respiratory tract infections in children and the leading cause of hospitalization for infants younger than one year is an illness known as RSV – Respiratory Syncytial Virus.

RSV affects most children within their first two years of life. Symptoms are similar to those of the common cold—a fever and runny nose. Infants born prematurely or children with chronic lung disease who are infected with RSV often need to be hospitalized.

RSV is very contagious. Babies are more likely to get RSV during the winter months. Take precautions to keep your infant, especially a high-risk infant, from catching RSV.

- Always **wash your hands** with warm water and soap before holding your baby. Be sure that relatives and other caregivers wash their hands, too.
- Reduce contact with your baby if you have a cold or fever.
- Try to keep older brothers and sisters away from the baby as much as possible, especially if they have a runny nose, cold or fever.
- Do not take your baby out to crowded places such as shopping centers.
- Do not smoke—or let others smoke—around your baby.

Infants at high risk for RSV may need medicine to help prevent infection. Talk to your baby's doctor right away if you see symptoms of RSV. **This disease can progress quickly**.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital