

Information about Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)



You may have heard about some people getting sick from Respiratory Syncytial (sin-SISH-uhl) Virus, or RSV. RSV is caused by a type of germ called a virus. You may be more familiar with COVID-19 and the flu, but RSV is not new, unfamiliar, or uncommon. Just like COVID-19 and the flu, you can protect yourself and your family by getting immunizations, and you can treat symptoms after you get sick. Medicines are available to help protect infants, young children, and Elders from illness. **It is safe to get RSV, COVID, and flu immunizations at the same time.**

What is RSV?

RSV is a common respiratory virus that affects the lungs, throat, and sometimes breathing.¹ Most people usually get mild, cold-like symptoms and feel better in 1-2 weeks.² RSV is most common between the months of October – May, and usually peaks between December – January. RSV can cause more severe illness in some people, including premature infants, babies younger than 12 months, and adults over 60 years old.

What are common symptoms of RSV?

Symptoms usually include:

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Loss of appetite
- Fever or chills
- Wheezing

Contact your healthcare provider and seek care if your child is experiencing worsening RSV symptoms or is having difficulty breathing.

How is RSV spread?

RSV is spread by tiny water droplets carrying the virus. People can become sick by:

- Breathing in the droplets. This can happen when a person with RSV coughs, sneezes, breathes, or talks
- Touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching objects covered in the droplets

What else should I know?

Some people are more at risk for severe illness from RSV including:

- Infants
- People with weakened immune systems
- People experiencing chronic health conditions
- Adults ages 60 years and older
- Adults in assisted living or long-term care centers

How can I protect myself and my loved ones?

- Stay home when you feel sick
- Wash hands often with soap and water
- Avoid close with people who are sick
- Wear a face mask over your nose and mouth
- Clean surfaces often
- Cover coughs and sneezes

What else can I do to protect my community?

The best way to prevent RSV is by getting an RSV immunization (called ABRYSCO, AREXVY, and Nirsevimab). RSV immunizations are available to pregnant people, infants, and people over 60 years old.



What are the most common side effects of the RSV immunizations?

The most common side effects of the RSV immunizations are pain at the injection site, redness and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, fever, headache, nausea, diarrhea, and muscle or joint pain. Experiencing these symptoms does not mean you have RSV.

What are the benefits of RSV immunizations?

The RSV immunizations decrease the risk of severe RSV. Pediatric RSV immunizations have been tested for safety and effectiveness in children. *These medicines are provided at no cost by a federally funded program called Vaccines for Children.*

Contact your local clinic or pharmacy to schedule an appointment for a COVID, RSV, and Flu vaccine.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Respiratory syncytial virus. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>
2. Mayo Clinic. Respiratory syncytial virus- Symptoms and causes. Mayo clinic. Published October 4, 2023. <https://mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/respiratory->