



CALHOUN COUNTY  
**Public Health Department**

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[calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth](http://calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth)  
269-969-6370

Fact Sheet

## **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)**

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### **What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)?**

Respiratory Syncytial Virus, also known as RSV, is a respiratory virus that causes cold-like symptoms that are usually mild. While most people recover on their own, some can have serious illness that requires hospitalization. RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children less than 1 year old. Almost all children will have had RSV infection by their second birthday.

### **How is RSV spread?**

RSV is spread person to person through droplets containing the virus. This includes:

- An infected person sneezing or coughing, spreading infected droplets
- Direct contact, such as kissing the face of an infected person
- Touching a surface that has the virus living on it, such as a door handle, and then touching your face before washing your hands

People infected with RSV are usually contagious 1 to 2 days before symptoms begin and up to 3 to 8 days after symptoms start.

### **What are the symptoms of RSV?**

RSV symptoms can appear in stages instead of all at once. In young infants, symptoms may only include decreased activity, irritability, and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing
- Decreased appetite

## **Who is at higher risk for RSV?**

While anyone can be infected with RSV, some people are at higher risk for infection or severe symptoms. These groups include:

- Premature infants
- Young children who are immunocompromised or have heart or lung disease
- Adults who are immunocompromised
- Older adults, particularly those with heart or lung disease

## **What is the treatment for RSV?**

There is no specific treatment for RSV. Most RSV infections go away on their own in a week or two. Management can include:

- Fever and pain management with over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Consult with primary care provider if symptoms worsen

## **How can RSV be prevented?**

There are many ways to prevent the spread of RSV. If a person has cold-like symptoms, they should:

- Cover their mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing
- Wash hand often with soap and warm water
- Avoid close contact with a person who is sick
- If you are sick, avoid close contact with others, especially children
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces regularly

## **How do I get more information on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)?**

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

[www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/](https://www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/prevention-sp.html>

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)  
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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.