



CALHOUN COUNTY
Public Health Department

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Fact Sheet

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

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
- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Consulting with primary care provider if symptoms worsen

What should I do if I have symptoms of RSV?

Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick).

How do I know when I can return to normal activities after having RSV?

You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall **and**
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication)

Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take precaution for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as:

- Taking more steps for cleaner air
- Enhancing hygiene practices
- Wearing a well-fitting mask
- Keeping distance from others
- Getting testing to inform your actions to prevent spread to others.

CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)).

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

An RSV vaccine is available for at risk adults 60 and older.

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.

Monoclonal antibody products are available for infants younger than 8 months during their first or second RSV season and children under 24 months at high risk for severe disease.

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

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

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>

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