

HAND HYGIENE

WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER

RSV is highly contagious. Following the guidelines in this pamphlet may help reduce the risk of RSV transmission to others.

RSV is a virus, antibiotics have no effect on viruses. Treatment is mainly to relieve the symptoms of the virus.

If you are worried about your child's condition please speak to your health care provider.

**IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES,
DOCTORS, AND OTHER
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IF
THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR
HANDS.**

**ASK VISITORS IF THEY HAVE
WASHED THEIR HANDS.**

**HAND HYGIENE
THE BEST
WAY TO PREVENT
INFECTION**

Special care must be paid to hand hygiene as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

GOOD HAND HYGIENE INCLUDES:

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

Hand Washing

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. Dispose of paper towel in the garbage.

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Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

A Guide for Parents



*Information for Clients,
Residents, Families, and Visitors*

INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM
www.easternhealth.ca



WHAT IS RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)?

RSV is a *very* common *virus*. It is the most common respiratory infection in infants and young children. Most children have had RSV by age 3 years. Antibiotics have no effect on viruses.

DO ALL INFANTS AND CHILDREN WITH RSV BECOME SICK?

RSV can cause symptoms similar to a common cold; however, some infants and children can develop pneumonia or bronchiolitis. Infected adults can pass this virus on to children.

WHO IS AT RISK OF SEVERE ILLNESS FROM RSV?

- Infants born before 32 weeks.
- Infants with chronic illness, especially lung and heart disease.
- Infants living in remote areas who are less than 36 weeks or less than 6 months of age at the start of the RSV season.
- Children and adults with weakened immune systems.
- The elderly.

WHEN DOES RSV SEASON OCCUR?

In Newfoundland and Labrador, RSV tends to occur mostly between January and May each year.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF RSV?

The symptoms can be like a cold at first and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Irritability
- Decreased activity
- Decreased appetite

These symptoms may get worse and may include:

- Persistent cough
- Wheezing (whistle sound)
- Rapid and/or difficulty breathing
- Decreased activity

HOW IS RSV SPREAD?

- RSV is spread easily by coughing and sneezing.
- RSV can live for 30 minutes or more on unwashed hands and several hours on surfaces.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE IN HOSPITAL

- Droplet and Contact precautions will be started while you are in hospital.
- A sign will be posted on your child's door.
- They will be required to stay in their room.
- If your child must leave the room for tests they may be required to wear a mask, if tolerated.
- All staff and visitors must clean their hands when they enter and leave your room.
- Staff and visitors will wear mask, gown, and gloves.

- Items brought into your room must stay in the room. RSV can live on objects in the room so it is important to clean items before they are taken out of the room.
- Always remove gowns, masks, and gloves before leaving the room. **Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.** Always clean your hands after removing gloves.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT RSV?

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent infection.

- Clean hands before and after touching the infant/child.
- Keep individuals with cold symptoms away from the infant/child.
- Keep infants away from crowded places during RSV season (*i.e. shopping malls*).
- Do not smoke around infants and children.
- Breastfeeding is recommended to support your infant's immune system.
- Encourage children to wash their hands regularly, especially after returning from school/daycare/play/group activities.
- Do not share personal items such as pacifiers, eating utensils, toothbrushes, etc.

IF MY BABY HAS ALREADY HAD RSV CAN THEY BE INFECTED AGAIN?

Yes. Unfortunately being infected once does not protect your baby from becoming infected again.