

Who is at risk?

Children under the age of three years are at the highest risk of significant illness. Babies under six months old and children born prematurely or with weak immune systems are particularly at risk. Children often develop ear infections and croup from RSV.

RSV can also cause significant illness in adults, especially in older people and those with weakened immune systems. A common complication of RSV in adults is pneumonia.

Help and Assistance

For more information:

- See your local doctor
- Contact your nearest public health unit
- Call 13 HEALTH (13 25 84)

In an emergency situation, call 000.

Contact details

Infection Prevention and Control

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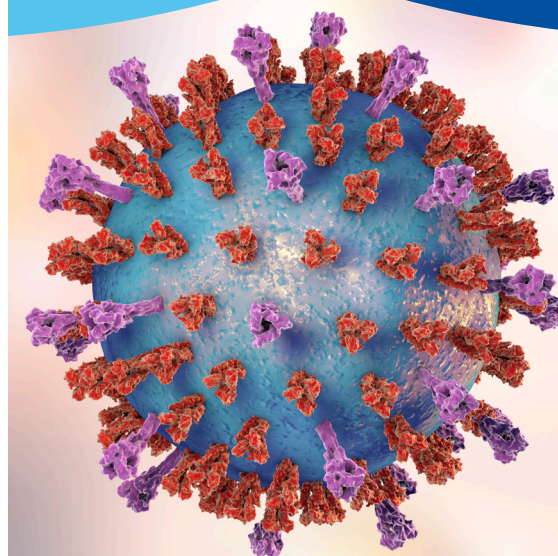


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RSV Respiratory Syncytial Virus

A guide for patients and visitors of the
Townsville Hospital and Health Service



Infection Prevention
and Control



Queensland
Government

What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a highly-contagious virus that causes a cold-like illness. RSV can infect the upper airways and lungs. RSV can cause complications like pneumonia.

How do you know you have RSV?

Most cases of RSV infection can be diagnosed by a doctor from the symptoms and can be confirmed by a laboratory test that is taken from the nose or throat. Symptoms of the illness usually begin three to ten days after exposure.

Symptoms of RSV can include:

- Runny nose
- Cough
- Fever
- Wheezing.



How does RSV spread?

RSV can live for half an hour or more on hands and for up to five hours on hard surfaces. It spreads easily by direct contact through droplet from a sneeze or cough. People can also be infected by touching their nose or eyes after touching a person with RSV or contaminated items.

A person is usually infectious for up to ten days.

What can you do to help stop the spread?

There is no current vaccine against RSV, so the best way to help reduce the spread of the virus is prevention.

To reduce the spread of RSV you should:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose and before touching people
- Avoid sharing items like cups, lipsticks, toys, or anything that has come into contact with the mouth
- Use a tissue or the inside of your arm when you cough or sneeze, then discard the tissue

- Avoid contact with at-risk people
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces like door handles, taps and benches.

What is the treatment for RSV?

There is no medical treatment for RSV, however, there are a number of things you can do to make you feel better:

- Rest in bed
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Stay home from work/school while you have symptoms
- Take over the counter medications to help relieve symptoms.

