

2005
BATON ROUGE
Parents
FAMILY
FAVORITE

The Doctor Is In

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“Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)”

RSV is a major cause of respiratory illness in young children. The peak “season” of RSV is between late September and early April. It is a viral infection that attacks the respiratory tract and spreads from person to person through everyday contact, such as sharing drinks, food, toys, etc. It can also be spread by shaking hands, or inhaling droplets from an infected person’s cough or sneeze.

RSV usually starts much like the common cold. Symptoms include low grade fever, runny nose, cough, and decreased appetite. In some children the symptoms can be more severe, such as wheezing, respiratory distress, and apnea. These high-risk children include the very young, premature, or those born with heart, lung, or immune system problems.

RSV is very contagious, and should be taken very seriously. Since it is a virus, antibiotics do not help. Treatment of mild to moderate RSV is mostly supportive. Saline drops to the nose and use of a suction bulb can help remove excess nasal secretions. Bronchodilator therapy can help with congestion and wheezing. Most cases resolve within 10-14 days. Severe cases of RSV usually require admission to the hospital for oxygen therapy. Diagnosis can be made in most health care settings by testing the nasal secretions for the virus.

The best way to avoid RSV is prevention. Please make sure everyone (especially other children) wash their hands, and covers their cough when they are around other young children. Please contact your pediatrician with any concerns.



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