

HIGHLAND RIM HEAD START

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ATTENTION PARENTS: There have been diagnosed cases of RSV here at our center. Below is some information about RSV for you to review.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

About RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which causes infection of the lungs and breathing passages, is a major cause of respiratory illness in young children.

In adults, it may only produce symptoms of a common cold, such as a stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, mild headache, cough, fever, and a general feeling of being ill. But in premature babies and kids with diseases that affect the lungs, heart, or immune system, RSV infections can lead to other more serious illnesses.

RSV is highly contagious and can be spread through droplets containing the virus when someone coughs or sneezes. It also can live on surfaces (such as countertops or doorknobs) and on hands and clothing, so can be easily spread when a person touches something contaminated.

RSV can spread rapidly through schools and childcare centers. Babies often get it when older kids carry the virus home from school and pass it to them. Almost all kids are infected with RSV at least once by the time they're 2 years old.

Preventing RSV

Because RSV can be easily spread by touching infected people or surfaces, frequent hand washing is key in preventing its transmission. Try to wash your hands after having any contact with someone who has cold symptoms. And keep your school-age child with a cold away from younger siblings — particularly infants — until the symptoms pass.

Treating RSV

Fortunately, most cases of RSV are mild and require no specific treatment from doctors. Antibiotics aren't used because RSV is a virus and antibiotics are only effective against bacteria. Medication may sometimes be given to help open airways.

In an infant, however, an RSV infection can be more serious and may require hospitalization so that the baby can be watched closely, receive fluids, and, if necessary, be treated for breathing problems.

When to Call the Doctor

Call the doctor if your child has any of these symptoms:

- high fever with ill appearance
- thick nasal discharge
- worsening cough or cough that produces yellow, green, or gray mucus
- signs of dehydration

In infants, besides the symptoms already mentioned, call the doctor if your baby is unusually irritable or inactive, or refuses to breastfeed or bottle-feed.

Seek immediate medical help if you feel your child is having difficulty breathing or is breathing very rapidly, is lethargic, or if his or her lips or fingernails appear blue.

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