

Protect your child from RSV this holiday season

What is RSV?

RSV is a common respiratory virus that happens every year, but this year more people are getting sick with it. Most of us will do just fine because we have been exposed to the virus before and have some immune protection. But babies and young kids who are being exposed for the first time may not fare so well. More kids and parents are being exposed this year because we are no longer wearing masks and keeping our distance. Babies six months and younger, premature infants and young children with chronic health conditions are most likely to experience complications.



How do you prevent RSV and other respiratory illnesses?

The precautions we took to prevent COVID-19 also work for RSV, flu and other respiratory viruses:

- stay home if you are sick.
- if you have a very young child or new baby, consider not attending gatherings or gather virtually so you don't expose your child to viruses.
- if you have a young child, wear a mask around others outside your household to prevent bringing illness home.
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water and use hand sanitizer.
- disinfect surfaces; this is especially important to prevent RSV because this virus lives a long time on surfaces.
- don't let others kiss or hold your child.

Protect your child from RSV this holiday season (continued)

What if my child does get sick?

Early symptoms of RSV, flu and COVID-19 can be similar. Your child may have a runny nose, cough, decrease in appetite or fever. RSV can cause trouble breathing, inflammation of the airways, or infection of the lungs.

For most children, you can manage symptoms at home with supportive care:

- use some saline water and a suction device to clean mucus out of your baby's nose.
- manage a fever with ibuprofen or acetaminophen; never give aspirin to a child.
 - if your child is six months or younger, consult your doctor before giving them medicine.
- keep your child hydrated.

Call your doctor if your child is:

- having trouble breathing, but is still alert.
- not drinking enough fluids, dehydrated (fewer wet diapers, making less urine).
- experiencing worsening symptoms.
 - if you don't have a doctor, call Washington County's Resource Line at 503-846-8851 or call 2-1-1.

Go to the emergency department or call 9-1-1 if your child is:

- struggling to breathe or is tiring out from breathing hard (you may be able to see your child's belly going in and out, which means they are having to use their tummy muscles to breathe).
- less alert or responsive than usual.

if it is safe to do so, call your provider before going to the emergency department. ED's are very busy right now and your provider may have some advice that will keep your child safe or they may be able to see you urgently in the clinic.

Is there a vaccine for RSV?

No, but it is important to also protect yourself and your family from the flu and COVID this year. Find locations for those vaccines by visiting our [COVID vaccine](#) and [flu pages](#): (wcor.us/vaccine) - (<https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/disease-control/flu>)

Where can I learn more about RSV?

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention RSV page](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html): (<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>)

[American Academy of Pediatrics RSV page](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/RSV-When-Its-More-Than-Just-a-Cold.aspx): (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/RSV-When-Its-More-Than-Just-a-Cold.aspx>)