



# RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

Some cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) have been reported from your child's school or classroom. RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can be serious, especially for infants and older adults.

## HOW DOES RSV SPREAD?

RSV spreads between people when an infected person coughs or sneezes near others and you get virus droplets in your eyes, nose, or mouth. Or you touch a surface that has the virus on it, and then touch your face before washing your hands.

## SYMPTOMS AND CARE

### Symptoms

People infected with RSV usually show symptoms within 4 to 6 days after getting infected. Symptoms of RSV infection usually include runny nose, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, and/or wheezing. These symptoms usually appear in stages and not all at once.

### Care

Most RSV infections go away on their own in a week or two. You can take steps to relieve symptoms, such as managing fever and pain and drinking enough fluids.

## HOW TO PREVENT RSV?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following steps to prevent the spread of RSV, especially if you or your child is experiencing cold-like symptoms.

1. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, not your hands.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
3. Avoid close contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, and sharing cups and eating utensils, with others.
4. Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and mobile devices.

Ideally, people with cold-like symptoms should not interact with children at high risk for severe RSV disease. If this is not possible, carefully follow the prevention steps listed above and wash your hands before interacting with high-risk children.

## RESOURCES

[cdc.gov/rsv](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv)