



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Investigation Branch

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## Respiratory Syncytial Virus

(RSV)

### What is the respiratory syncytial virus?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a contagious respiratory virus that can cause cold-like symptoms.

### How do you get it?

RSV spreads from person to person in droplets from coughing or sneezing. It may also be spread by touching something with virus on it and then touching your mouth or nose.

### What are the symptoms of RSV?

Symptoms of RSV may include fever, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, and decrease in appetite.

Complications include pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

Very young infants can also show symptoms of irritability, decreased activity, and sleep apnea.

### For how long is a person with the flu contagious?

You may be contagious for 3 to 8 days, and infants and people with weakened immune systems can continue to be contagious for as long as 4 weeks after symptoms stop showing.

### What is the treatment for RSV?

Most cases of RSV go away on their own within a week or two.

There is no specific treatment for RSV.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Advil) can be given for fever and pain. Aspirin should never be given to children or teenagers with flu-like symptoms.

### Should a person with RSV stay away from work or school?

Yes. Because RSV is very contagious, it is important to stay away from others until you are feeling better.

### How can you keep from getting RSV?

There is no vaccine to prevent RSV infection.

Special care should be taken around young children and those who are at a higher risk of developing severe disease:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay away from others to protect them from getting sick also.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you cannot use soap and water, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces where people frequently touch and where germs from coughs and sneezes may land.

Palivizumab is a monoclonal antibody recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to be administered to high-risk infants and young children. It is given in monthly injections during RSV season. Consult your child's physician for further guidance.

For more information, see the CDC's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>