

Patient Safety Your Health Care – Be Involved

Your safety is our concern. In order to have the best health care be an active member of your health care team. Here are some ways to Be Involved:

- Ask questions and talk about your concerns
- Know the medications you need and why these are needed
- Carry a current list of medications you and your child need to share with all health care providers
- Carry a list of current medical conditions, allergies, past problems and surgeries

When you are involved, you can make better health care decisions. For more information there is a booklet called “Your Health Care – Be Involved” published by the Ontario Hospital Association. Ask a member of your health care team for a copy. You can download this book in many languages from www.oha.com

St. Joseph's
Healthcare  Hamilton

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
PD 3302 (2010-10) File: printing

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Respiratory Syncytial Virus ~ RSV ~

Protecting babies and children



www.stjoes.ca

What is RSV?

RSV is a virus that causes an infection in the lower part of the lungs. RSV is one of the most common viruses causing colds for people of all ages.

However, RSV can be very harmful to newborns and young children. You can get RSV any time of the year. It is more common in the winter months and early spring.

Where does RSV come from?

RSV travels in the air when someone coughs, breathes, sneezes or laughs. It is found in saliva in mouths.



RSV can be passed on by kissing or breathing close to a child.

A child or adult with RSV can pass the virus on by touching or coughing on toys, crib rails or bed sheets for example. The virus lives between 1 and 6 hours when it is transferred to an object.

Brothers, sisters, family members and visitors can pass the virus on even when they do not feel sick.

How do I prevent my child from getting RSV?

Close contact with the virus needs to be prevented. People with colds should not go near newborn babies, premature babies and children with medical problems.

Teach members of your family to wash their hands well with warm soapy water after coughing, sneezing and touching their mouths and noses. Adults and children who have been at work, school or day care need to wash their hands very well as soon as they get home.



If a family member or visitor feels a cold coming on, ask them to stay away from your child.

If you are a caregiver, wear a mask and wash your hands often.



Steps for handwashing



What happens in the hospital? (continued)

Your child will receive oxygen if needed. Your child can breathe the oxygen and still eat, play, rest and sleep. A small clip is used on the finger or foot to measure the amount of oxygen your child has in his or her blood. This is called an oximetry test. The amount of oxygen is then adjusted based on the results.

Can my child get RSV again?

Your child can get RSV again. Most children recover well and may get a milder case the next time.

What do I watch for?

RSV begins like a cold. The child may have a runny or stuffy nose, red or sore throat, fever, sneezing or wheezing. The child may have a choking or gagging cough. Some children cough so much they vomit. An infant may have rapid breathing, grunting, severe coughing or look unwell.

All children need to be watched closely. Children that are very young, have medical problems or were premature may get sick fast. **For these children, call the doctor or health care provider any time they have a respiratory infection.**



Contact your doctor or health care provider if your child:

- breastfeeds or bottlefeeds poorly
- feeds or eats poorly
- has flushed skin or feels hot
- has pale skin, bluish lips or looks unwell
- coughs or cries a lot
- has trouble breathing or is wheezing
- vomits when coughing



How is RSV treated?

Most children are able to fight the infection with fever medication, rest and drinking lots of liquids.



Your doctor or health care provider will tell you how to manage your child's symptoms.

Some children need to stay in the hospital to be watched closely by the health care team.



What happens in the hospital?

The nurses will watch your child closely. The nurses will listen to your child's chest with a stethoscope and take the temperature when needed.



The nurse will take a small sample of mucous from the back of your child's nose. This will be sent to the lab for testing. The results of the test are usually ready in one day. This helps the doctor decide what type of treatment your child will have.

Your child may have the head of the bed up to help breathing.

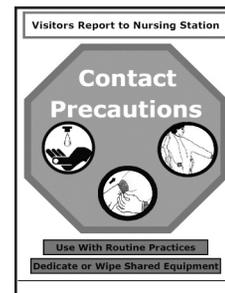
You and the nurses will keep a record of what your child drinks and when he or she wets.

Your child may have medication to control fever.

Your child will be in isolation. This means that your child cannot leave the room. This protects your child and others from infection.

You, visitors and staff need to follow the Infection Control Sign outside of your child's room. You will need to wash your hands then put on a gown and a mask and face shield each time you enter the room. You will also need to wear gloves if you are changing diapers, clothes or bathing your child. Your nurse will help you and your visitors learn the steps to follow.

Here is an example of an Isolation Sign:



Wash your hands



Put on a gown



Put on gloves

When you leave the room you need to remove the gloves if you were wearing them, gown, mask and face shield. Put them in the garbage container provided. Wash your hands again so you do not pass the virus on.

Why is handwashing important?

- Clean hands reduce the spread of germs.
- Germs, like cold or flu can make you sick.
- Clean hands can save lives.