

RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

What is RSV?

RSV is a viral infection that is the major cause of pneumonia, croup, bronchiolitis, ear infection and upper respiratory illness with fever.

How is it spread?

RSV is spread by ingesting or inhaling droplets, by handling soiled objects such as handkerchiefs, and the eating utensils of infected persons. The feces also contain the virus.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms may include fever, chills, headache, general aching, tiredness and a loss of appetite. Other signs may include inflammation of the lining of the nose, throat, tonsils, upper breathing tubes or bronchial tubes of the lungs. In premature infants, the signs may be minimal and often include lethargy, irritability, poor feeding and apnea (temporary cessation of breathing).

What is the incubation period and how long is it communicable?

The incubation period is from one to ten days. It is communicable prior and for the duration of the illness. It may be found for several weeks in the stool after symptoms are gone.

How can RSV be prevented?

There is no vaccine at this time; however, RSV—IGIV (Immune Globulin) may be given to premature infants and other infants with chronic lung disease to prevent serious complications in these high risk groups. Consult your physician for the schedule.

Good and frequent hand washing and disinfecting changing tables will help stop the spread of the virus. Also, children and adults should not share items such as cups, glasses, and utensils.

It is recommended to use spray bottles to apply the disinfectant (1 part bleach to 9 part of cool water to be prepared daily) to contaminated surfaces such as toilets, sinks, floors, tables, water fountains or any areas where a sick individual has been.

What should I do about it?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians.

A child or sensitive worker should not be in school/daycare or at work until 24 hrs after symptoms subside. If more than one case is identified, the individual must be excluded until 48 hrs after symptoms subside.

Clusters of two or more persons are considered a **reportable disease** to the Santa Rosa County Health Department (SRCHD).

For more information, please contact the SRCHD at 850-983-5200.

