

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in Children

RSV is a common respiratory virus that affects the lungs and airways. Almost all children will become infected with RSV by the time they're 2 years old, with a majority only experiencing mild, cold-like symptoms.



RSV prevention

- 1 Frequently wash your hands with soap and water (or hand sanitizer)
- 2 Try not to touch your face
- 3 Avoid close contact, such as kissing or sharing cups and utensils, with people who are sick
- 4 Cover your coughs and sneezes
- 5 Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often, including toys, doorknobs, countertops and electronics
- 6 Stay home when you aren't feeling well



What to do if your child has RSV

Most children will completely recover from RSV within a week or two with plenty of rest and fluids. At home, you can take the following steps to improve your child's symptoms:

- For infants, perform nasal suctioning with saline before and after naps and prior to feeding. Visit [LVHN.org/RSV](https://www.lvh.org/RSV) to watch a video with step-by-step instructions from a pediatric emergency medicine physician.
- Give appropriate over-the-counter medications recommended by your child's pediatrician.



Mild symptoms of RSV

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|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coughing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Runny nose |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decreased appetite | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sneezing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fever | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sore throat |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headache | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheezing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irritability or decreased activity (specifically in infants) | |

When to make an appointment

Please call your pediatrician's office to be directed to the appropriate level of care or for instructions on how to have your child seen.



Your health deserves a partner.



Fever concerns

When it comes to fever, call your pediatrician if your child is:

- 3 months old or younger and has a fever of 100.4°F or higher for any length of time
- Between 4 months and 2 years old and has a fever of 100.4°F or higher for more than a day
- 2 years old or older and has a fever of 100.4°F or higher for more than three days



Resources from Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital

If your child is sick, the Children's Hospital's PedsPartner app can help you determine the best next steps for their care and connect you with additional resources. To learn more, visit [LVHN.org/pedspartner](https://www.lvhn.org/pedspartner).



Serious RSV symptoms that require emergency care

While most cases of RSV in children are mild, if your child is under 1 year old or has a chronic lung disease, congenital heart disease or weakened immune system, they could become very sick from RSV.

If your child experiences any of the following symptoms, they should be seen at the Breidegam Family Children's ER or the closest emergency room.

- Severe drowsiness or lack of alertness
- Severe cough
- Skin, lips or fingernails that appear blue
- Trouble breathing
 - Struggling for each breath or being short of breath
 - Tight breathing that makes it difficult to speak or cry
 - Retractions (when the ribs pull in with each breath)
 - Noisy breathing (such as wheezing)
 - Breathing much faster than normal

Returning to day care and school after RSV

Your child can return to day care or school once their wheezing has stopped and they are fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for more than 24 hours.