

# BRONCHIOLITIS & RSV

## (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

### WHAT IS BRONCHIOLITIS?

Bronchiolitis is an infection caused by germs that enter the lungs. Most often it is caused by a virus called Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Bronchiolitis can range from mild to a serious respiratory infection in babies and children under 2 years of age. It can happen all year round but is more common during the winter.

### WHAT IS RSV LIKE?

#### It can cause:

- Runny, stuffy nose
- Fever
- Cough and other cold like symptoms

### CAN BRONCHIOLITIS BE SERIOUS?

Yes, it can, especially for babies born prematurely and babies under one year of age. They may develop a more serious type of infection, like pneumonia and need to be admitted to the hospital.

Children who have other health problems, such as heart or lung disease may be at increased risk for bronchiolitis infections. Talk to your Health Care Provider if your child has heart or lung disease or was born premature.

Babies and children should be kept away from all forms of second-hand smoke (for example; cigarettes, vaping, cannabis). Smoke makes coughing and wheezing worse. Smoke can hurt your baby's/child's lungs and can cause increased risk of catching RSV.

### WHEN SHOULD MY BABY/CHILD SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION?

#### If your child:

- Has a hard time breathing
- Has a frequent choking cough
- Is breathing fast
- Wheezing with breathing (whistle sound)
- Is sleepy, very tired and not playful
- Difficulty feeding and has less than 3 wet diapers in a day
- Looks off colour (for example; pale, blue lips)

### HOW IS BRONCHIOLITIS TREATED?

Your baby/child may need to have help clearing the mucus out of their nose with a nasal bulb suction. They may need oxygen and medication masks to help with their breathing.

If your baby/child has a fever and is uncomfortable, you may need to give them medicine.

Bronchiolitis cannot be cured by antibiotics because it is a virus.

Babies and children who have bronchiolitis should be fed in an upright position, not flat.

### IT IS EASY TO CATCH RSV

RSV Bronchiolitis is very contagious and can spread easily in crowded living spaces and in public spaces. Adults or older children who have RSV may only have a mild cold. RSV and other germs are spread mostly by touch. It can be picked up by:

Direct contact with the mucus from the sick person's nose or mouth, for example a person who is sick might cough or sneeze onto your baby or kiss your baby/child.

By touching surfaces, such as tables, crib rails, chairs, equipment or toys, that has been coughed on by the sick person in or out of the home.

Poor hand washing practices.

## HOW TO PREVENT BRONCHIOLITIS FROM SPREADING

**Hand washing is the most important way to stop the spread of germs like RSV**

Children with cold symptoms should stay at home until they are better.

Children, especially babies, should stay away from crowded places and large gatherings.

Avoid close contact with people who may be sick.

Wash your hands before touching your baby.

Wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or after being around a person who is sick.

Use a tissue only once and wash hands after use.

Do not give your baby/child toys or other objects that have been used by anyone else.

Teach children to turn away and cough into a tissue or into their sleeve, and to wash their hands with soap and water after coughing or sneezing.

## CAN MY CHILD GET BRONCHIOLITIS FROM RSV AGAIN?

Yes, almost all children have had RSV at least once by 2 years of age.

## IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CALL:

- Your Doctor
- The Public Health Nurse or Nursing Station
- Health Links – Info Santé  
(24 hours a day at 204-788-8200 or toll free 1-888-315-9257)
- Talk to your Health Care Provider about receiving the flu shot

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