



# RSV – Respiratory Syncytial Virus

By Dr. Shannon Austin

RSV is a common and challenging winter virus. Here are a few things you should know about the illness.

RSV is a virus that typically causes symptoms resembling the common cold, including fever, runny nose, congestion, and cough. Children < 2 years old are at a higher risk of the infection causing bronchiolitis, which involves wheezing and trouble breathing. The infection is easily spread from person to person from nasal or mouth secretions. The illness can last several days with the peak of symptoms commonly occurring around day 4.

Your child should be seen by the doctor if he/she is:

- showing signs of trouble breathing (grunting, using rib or abdominal muscles to breathe, nasal flaring, or fast breathing).
- fever in a child less than 3 months.
- or has signs of dehydration (dry mouth, decreased urine output, lethargy).

Because RSV is a virus, antibiotics are not helpful in treating the infection. The best treatments for RSV symptoms are nasal saline spray and suction, humidifier, and time. You can help prevent the spread of infection by good hand washing and proper disposal of tissues.

To learn more about RSV, visit <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Respiratory-Syncytial-Virus-RSV.aspx>