

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) FAQs



1. What is RSV?

RSV stands for respiratory syncytial virus. RSV is a virus that can make people sick. It spreads from person to person, like a cold. Most adults recover in a week or two, but RSV can be serious for some people.

2. How does RSV spread?

RSV spreads when a sick person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes near other people. The virus can also spread when someone touches a surface with RSV on it and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. People can spread RSV even before they know they are sick.

3. What are common symptoms of RSV?

People with RSV may have:

- A runny nose
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing
- Sore throat
- Lack of energy

Most people have mild symptoms. Some people may develop a lung infection or have trouble breathing.

4. Who can get very sick from RSV?

Some people are more likely to get very sick from RSV, including:

- Babies
- Adults aged 75 years and older
- Adults aged 50 to 74 years with certain health conditions
- People with heart disease
- People with lung disease, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- People with weakened immune systems
- People living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities



← Scan here to access additional helpful vaccine and immunization resources at www.SpreadTheFacts.org

©2026 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) FAQs



5. How can I help protect myself from RSV?

Getting an RSV vaccine is one of the best ways to help protect yourself.

You can also help lower your chance of getting RSV by:

- Washing your hands often
- Staying away from people who are sick with RSV
- Cleaning surfaces that are touched often
- Improving indoor air quality when possible

6. Who should get an RSV vaccine?

RSV vaccination is recommended for:

- Adults aged 75 years and older
- Adults aged 50 to 74 years who are at higher risk for severe RSV illness
- Those who are pregnant during RSV season are recommended to receive the RSV vaccine to protect their infants after birth. Patients should receive the vaccine when they are between 32 and 36 weeks pregnant between September 1 and March 1 as long as they do not have a planned delivery within two weeks; they did not receive the maternal RSV vaccine during a previous pregnancy; and if they are not planning to have their infant receive a monoclonal antibody, (nirsevimab or clesrovimab).
- RSV immunization is recommended for all infants under 8 months of age born during or entering their first RSV season, unless the infant has documented protection from vaccination of their pregnant parent; and for infants and children 8 through 19 months of age who are at high risk of severe RSV disease and entering their second RSV season.



← Scan here to access additional helpful vaccine and immunization resources at www.SpreadTheFacts.org

©2026 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.