

RSV

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (Parent Guidelines)

Q What is RSV?

A RSV, which stands for Respiratory Syncytial Virus, is a common virus causing coughs, colds and wheezy chests during the winter months.

Q Who gets RSV?

A Anyone, but the infection is usually worse in the very young and the elderly.

Q If my child has had RSV, can they get it again?

A Yes. The first RSV infection is usually the worst. Repeat infections tend to be milder.

Q How is RSV spread?

A By contact with an infected person or by touching objects that have come in contact or been used by an infected person. The virus enters the body through the nose and mouth. It can survive for up to 12 hours on worktops and equipment and for up to 30 minutes on unwashed hands.

Q What are the symptoms of RSV?

A These could be fast noisy breathing, high temperature, and your child might find it hard to feed properly.

Q How is RSV treated?

A By treating your child's symptoms. This might be:

- help with feeding
- suction to remove excess mucous from your child's nose
- sitting your child in a more upright position
- paracetamol for high temperature
- oxygen to help them breath more easily

Your child's nurse or doctor will be able to explain exactly what treatment your child needs.

Please discuss your child's care with the nurse and doctor looking after them. Mild illness will resolve within 5-7 days.

Q How is your child tested for RSV?

A Your child will be tested for RSV by taking a sample of mucous from the back of their nose / throat.

If your child does have RSV, they will be tested every 4th day while in hospital until they no longer have the virus.

Q How do we care for children with RSV?

A Infants with RSV will be nursed in isolation in either:

- a single room *OR*
- In a cohort area (*an area separated from the rest of the ward*) with other patients who also have RSV.
- Isolation can stop after two negative specimens have been achieved.

When in isolation, the following actions are taken with...

- **Hand washing**

It is essential that you wash your hands thoroughly when you enter or leave your child's room or cohort area. Alternatively, if your hands are visibly clean, you can use the alcohol hand gel. It is important not to touch other patients in the hospital or handle their toys or clothing.

- **Linen and Waste**

All used linen must be placed in the linen bag provided. All waste must be placed in the orange bag provided except glass and aerosols which will be disposed of by nursing staff into a separate container.

- **Visitors**

Only parents or guardians are allowed to visit. No children are allowed into the isolation or cohort area.

- **Patient Transfer**

Your child should not be taken out of the isolation or cohort area unless there is an emergency, or unless there is a need to carry out some test which cannot be done at the bedside.

Discharge Information

Once well enough, your child may be allowed home even if they still have RSV. You should contact your own GP if you are worried about your child once you get home. If you would like more information, please speak to the nurse caring for your child.