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Advances in Neonatal Care

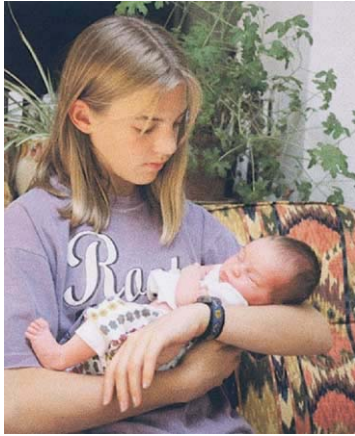
# *Family Teaching Toolbox*

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## FAMILY TEACHING TOOLBOX

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# PREVENTING RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) INFECTION



There are many things you can do to keep your baby healthy and avoid readmission to the hospital.



Premature babies get infections easily. Always wash your hands before you touch your baby.



Your baby's lungs are fragile. Never smoke around your baby.

### What is RSV?

RSV stands for respiratory syncytial virus. RSV is like a cold. Most babies will get an RSV cold in the first year of their life, often during the fall and winter months.

### How can I keep my baby from getting RSV?

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before you touch your baby.
- Also wash your hands after you have used a tissue to blow your nose, sneezed, or coughed.
- Do not smoke or let others smoke around your baby.
- Keep your baby away from anyone who is sick.
- If you are sick, do not kiss your baby.
- Keep your baby away from crowded places, day-care centers, shopping malls, and large family gatherings.
- Ask your healthcare provider if your baby would benefit from a medicine that prevents RSV.

### How do babies get RSV?

RSV infection is spread by germs contained in droplets on our hands. This happens when someone sneezes, coughs, or touches their nose or face when they are sick.

### How easy is it for babies to get RSV?

You can get an RSV cold if you touch, kiss, or shake hands with a person who has an RSV cold. The RSV virus can live for hours on a tabletop or on a dirty tissue. RSV infections are very common in crowded places like shopping malls or day-care centers. Infants, especially premature infants, have trouble fighting infections.

### How sick can my baby get if he or she gets RSV?

Most babies get a bad cold. Other babies, especially those babies born very premature, who have breathing problems, and who have certain types of heart problems, can become very sick. This is because the RSV infection can go to the lungs, and a chest infection called bronchiolitis and/or pneumonia develops. If this happens, your baby will have to go to the hospital. Some babies with RSV need oxygen or breathing assistance.

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# PREVENTING RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) INFECTION



Keep your baby away from crowded places like a shopping mall.



Keep your baby away from people who are sick.



Call your healthcare provider or go to the hospital if your baby is sick.

## How will I know if my baby has an RSV infection?

At first, your baby may have a runny nose. If the RSV gets worse, your baby may:

- Have a fever
- Start to cough
- Have problems with breathing
- Make a whistling or wheezing noise when breathing
- Breathe very fast or work hard to breathe
- Have trouble feeding

## What should I do if my baby gets sick?

Always call your healthcare provider if your baby seems sick, is not eating well, is irritable, and has a runny nose.

- If your baby has a fever or a cough, call your clinic right away.
- If your baby looks blue, or has difficulty breathing, or stops breathing, call the ambulance right away.

## Who can I speak to if I have more questions?

Speak to your baby's primary healthcare provider or a public health nurse for more information on RSV.

You can also look at these Internet resources that provide more information for parents about RSV.

### Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS)

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/index.htm](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/index.htm)

Information about RSV infection available in both English and French.

### American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Information about RSV prevention and treatment.

### RSV Info Center

[www.rsvinfo.com](http://www.rsvinfo.com)

Information about the most common cause of lower respiratory tract infections in children, risk factors, and treatment options.