



### What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus?

#### RSV

- is a viral infection usually presenting with a runny nose, cough, and + / - fever and wheeze.
- usually lasts 8—15 days.
- is generally a lower respiratory tract illness.
- is a common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children < 1 year
- frequently occurs in winter and early spring

### Who is affected by RSV?

- Prem babies, children less than 1 year and older adults are most at risk.
- Most children by 2 years of age will have been infected by RSV.
- Re-infections can occur throughout life, although symptoms are usually less severe.

### How is RSV spread?

- Contact of the virus with the mucous membrane of eyes, mouth or nose. This may be
  - Direct - Through inhalation or contact of mucous membrane with droplets generated by a sneeze or cough.
  - Indirect - Self inoculation by touching a contaminated surface and then touching mucous membranes—i.e. rubbing eyes, chewing fingernails, pens etc.
- Spreads easily among children during annual outbreaks.
- Tends to infect 50% of household contacts.

### When are you infectious?

- Immediately before the onset of symptoms,
- Viral shedding can occur for 3—8 days, and up to 4 weeks in children.

### How can RSV be prevented?

- No vaccine is available
- Use tissues and dispose of them immediately after use
- Good hand hygiene practices are essential
- Ensure communal equipment is cleaned between use— i.e. stethoscopes, crockery & cutlery.
- Stay home if unwell

### Did you know?

RSV can live on hard surfaces for hours and soft surfaces and unwashed hands for 30-60 minutes.

### Infection Control Precautions

#### Standard Precautions—

Hand Hygiene  
Don't share equipment  
Clean all equipment between patients  
Cough etiquette

#### Contact Precautions—

Gowns & gloves if contact with infectious material is likely  
Mask if contact with infectious material is likely

### Resources

The Red Book

CDC RSV fact sheet—avail from <http://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>

Guidelines for Isolation Precautions—avail from: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/guidelines/Isolation2007.pdf>