



For Staff Education

RSV

(respiratory syncytial virus)

What is it?

- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a respiratory virus that infects the respiratory tract
- Symptoms may include coughing, wheezing, sneezing, runny nose, fever and decrease in appetite
- Very young infants may experience irritability, decreased activity, and breathing difficulties
- RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children under 1 year of age, and almost all children will have been infected with the virus by their second birthday

How is it spread?

- RSV is spread by droplets and contact
- Droplet spread occurs when someone with RSV coughs or sneezes into another person's eyes, nose or mouth
- RSV is spread in the environment when people cough or sneeze onto surfaces, or touch surfaces with contaminated hands
- The virus can survive for hours on solid surfaces such as doorknobs and telephone handsets
- The virus can be picked up when someone touches a contaminated surface and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth

Where is it found?

- Humans are the only source of RSV
- It is found in the upper respiratory tract
- It can live on contaminated hands for up to 1/2 hour
- It may be found on environmental surfaces for several hours after they have been contaminated by

Prevention and control

- Clean hands well and often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Instruct residents and staff to cough into a tissue or their sleeve and clean their hands after sneezing or coughing
- Provide a private room for patients/residents if possible, otherwise, use spacing between beds to prevent transmission
- Use droplet and contact precautions (in addition to routine practices) when caring for anyone with a new or worsening cough and/or fever
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces on a regular basis to reduce risk of contact exposure from influenza