

# Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), is a prevalent and contagious virus that affects the respiratory system, particularly in young children and older adults.

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RSV infections often lead to mild cold-like symptoms, but in some cases, especially in infants and individuals with compromised immune systems, it can cause severe respiratory issues.

**RSV is a leading cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lungs) and pneumonia in children under the age of one.**

## Symptoms:

Symptoms include coughing, wheezing, runny nose, fever, and difficulty breathing. The virus spreads through respiratory droplets, making it easily transmissible, especially in crowded settings.

While most RSV infections result in mild illnesses, severe cases can lead to hospitalisation, especially in vulnerable populations.

## Prevention:

Public health measures such as hand hygiene, avoiding close contact with sick individuals, and maintaining a clean environment are essential to reduce the spread of RSV. As a common cause of respiratory illness, RSV continues to be an important area of public health focus, aiming to improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies for individuals of all ages.

Information for the public

**Follow the links below for information on Bronchiolitis:**

- [Bronchiolitis | nidirect](#)

- [Bronchiolitis - NHS](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [How to protect your baby from RSV | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\): questions and answers | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

## Vaccination

- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) vaccination programme launches in Northern Ireland | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [How to protect your baby from RSV - a guide to RSV vaccine for pregnant women](#)
- [Your guide to the RSV vaccine for older adults | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Schedule of antenatal appointments and recommended vaccinations | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Vaccine preventable diseases and immunisation programmes | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

## Guidance for health professionals

- [Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) immunisation programme for older adults: factsheet for healthcare practitioners](#)
- [Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) maternal immunisation programme for infant protection: factsheet for healthcare practitioners](#)

## Data and surveillance

[Respiratory surveillance report | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

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