

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Decrease appetite
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Ear ache (sinus pain)
- Rapid breathing
- Wheezing

Epidemiology:

RSV is detected throughout the year; however it is more common in winter and early spring and peaks commonly between December and April. RSV can cause upper respiratory infections and lower respiratory tract infections. The incubation period for RSV is 4 to 6 days and mode of transmission is direct contact, large droplets, and fomites. RSV has a high attack rate and commonly affects daycares and schools but can also cause severe illness and outbreaks in long-term care facilities and nursing homes.

Laboratory Testing:

Since RSV symptoms are similar to other respiratory illnesses such as influenza, respiratory testing is recommended to confirm the etiology. The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) offers free testing for outbreaks and for respiratory surveillance for sentinel providers/hospitals. Few clinical labs may also provide testing for RSV. Contact your local health department if you suspect you have an outbreak of RSV.

Infection Control: (long-term care and assisted living facilities)

- Standard precautions should be observed for all healthcare encounters.
- In addition to standard precautions, implement contact precautions, for the duration of illness as stated in the “2007 Guidelines for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Setting” guide.
- Encourage residents, staff and visitors to use general prevention measures listed below.
- Restrict ill staff from patient care. Restrict movement of staff between units.
- Recommend restriction of ill visitors; consider restriction of all visitors.
- Limit or defer new admissions.

Prevention:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wiping of hard surfaces with soap and water or disinfectant.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

