

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Prevention for Older Adults

What is RSV and how is it transmitted?

RSV is a contagious virus that affects the respiratory tract (i.e., nose, throat and lungs) in older adults (65 years and older).

Older adults who are 65 years and older, with chronic heart or lung disease, weak immune systems are at the highest risk of getting RSV.

The virus spreads when droplets from a cough, sneeze, or infected surface gets into your eyes, nose, or mouth.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Congestion
- Headache
- Tiredness

Symptoms in older adults can last up to two weeks and range from mild to severe. For those who have weakened immune systems it can be contagious up to 4 weeks even if they stop showing symptoms.

Complication of RSV include pneumonia and exacerbation of certain chronic conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure.

Prevention & Treatment

Currently there is no vaccine for RSV. However, there are preventive measures you can take which include:

- Wash your hands
- Wear a well fitted mask
- Keep your hands off your face
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Make sure there is adequate ventilation in your home
- Avoid indoor spaces with poor air flow
- Cover your cough and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect surfaces thoroughly
- Stay home when you are sick

Actions:

1. **Stay home when you are sick.**
 - o Flyer for COVID-19 that can be adapted from LACOE Fall Toolkit (Slide 14, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xvJPpOx_B2QH-nirQOOdEC2Eqi_zqBLN/view)
 - o Flyer for flu that can be adapted for RSV/acute respiratory illness in general from DPH (<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/hea/library/topics/flu/CDCP-ACDC-0120-01.pdf>)
2. **Cover your coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve**
 - o Flyer on covering cough (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/respiratoryhygiene.htm>)
3. **Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**
 - o Flyers on hand hygiene from DPH (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/respiratoryhygiene.htm>)
 - o When to wash your hands (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/key-times-to-wash-hands-eng-11x17-p.pdf>) would also be a great flyer to adapt for schools.
4. **Clean frequently touched surfaces (tables, doorknobs).**
5. **Maximize ventilation. Open windows for air circulation as possible.**
 - o Site for COVID-19 from CDC but can be adapted for RSV and flu (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>)

RSV

Source: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/diseases/RSV.htm>

