

RSV (bronchiolitis) epidemic in Stockholm

- For anyone with a newborn baby

RSV is a common cold virus that can be particularly problematic for very young babies. Each year, generally during the winter season as we spend more time inside, we see higher number of RSV cases.

Symptoms

RSV can cause a high temperature (fever) and a build-up of mucus in the baby's respiratory tract, with symptoms such as a cough, a runny nose, a blocked nose and breathing difficulties. Babies with RSV have to use a lot of energy to breathe and may find it difficult to breastfeed or feed from a bottle.

There is no medicine that can kill the virus itself. Treatment consists of symptom relief and support until the infection goes away by itself.

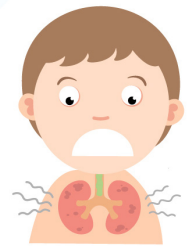
Babies usually have the most severe symptoms 4-6 days after they become ill and will then improve and be completely recovered within a few weeks. Most babies will cope with the infection if you help them by clearing their nose, breastfeeding or bottle feeding more often or giving them something to relieve a high temperature.



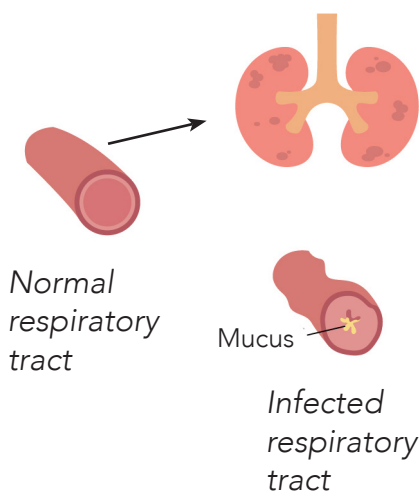
Breathing difficulties



Cough



Wheezing
Mucus



Why is RSV particularly problematic for babies?

Babies' respiratory tracts are narrow and they cannot cough in the same way as older children and adults. So babies are at greater risk of breathing difficulties from an RSV infection. The very youngest babies (under 4 months) are those most likely to need hospital care because of RSV (1-2% of all babies).

Keeping your baby from being infected during their first few months of life is therefore very good.

How does the virus infect babies?

The virus spreads when people are in close contact with each other, through droplets being spread through sneezing, coughing or via direct contact. It gets into the body through the mucous membranes in the mouth and nose.

The virus can be infectious for up to six hours on a hard surface, but can easily be deactivated by soap and water. Close contact between children, e.g., siblings or groups of children, is a high risk factor for transmission.



The virus spreads through close contact



Avoid close contact with anyone who is infected



Wash your hands often

How to protect your baby against infection

- Take special care with hygiene, wash your hands using soap, use hand sanitiser if possible, wipe away any obvious mucus and clean surfaces where the infection may have spread
- Be particularly careful to ensure your child does not come into contact with people with cold symptoms
- If your baby has older siblings, avoid having friends indoors at home
- Keep siblings away from pre-school if your baby is under four months. We know that babies with siblings are at much greater risk of becoming ill at an early stage and needing hospital care
- If possible, limit your socialising to smaller numbers of people and avoid large groups of children and crowds if your baby is under four months
- Ensure the baby is in a smoke-free environment
- Breastfeed if you can

If your baby becomes ill

- Breastfeed often and for a shorter time or bottle feed with smaller amounts more often
- Use a nasal aspirator/salt water drops to help a blocked nose
- Seek medical help if your child is unable to breastfeed or is finding it difficult to breathe
- Take special care if your baby was premature or has a severe heart or lung defect or disease.

Find out more on [1177.se](https://www.1177.se)



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