



Should I give my child cough medicine?

Have you noticed you can no longer buy baby cough medicines at the store? Many companies agreed to stop making them in 2007.

Why? In 2005, three babies who suddenly died had high levels of pseudoephedrine (a medicine to decrease nose stuffiness), up to 14 times the amount suggested for children ages 2 to 12 years old.

Further studies were done over the next two years. These studies led the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to recommend NO over-the-counter cough and cold medicines for babies and children under age 2. The FDA also strongly discourages their use for children ages 2 to 6 years old.

Since a cough can mean different things, parents should discuss their child's cough with their doctor. If the cough is not severe, fluids and a humidifier in the child's room can sometimes help calm it.

Patient safety is a top priority at Valley Children's. For this reason, we require all employees, volunteers and medical staff to receive the annual influenza vaccine.

RSV and other cold viruses can be life-threatening for premature infants. Therefore, children who are 12 years or younger may not visit the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) during the respiratory virus season (Dec. 1- March 30). This helps ensure the best care for our patients and families.

If you do not have a doctor for your child,
call the Valley Children's Pediatric Referral Service:

559.353.7349

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

A Guide for Parents

SNIFFLES AND SNEEZES

What is RSV?

RSV stands for Respiratory Syncytial Virus. This very common virus causes cold symptoms in both adults and children. It is the most common cause of serious respiratory tract infections in infants and children younger than 4 years of age.

RSV is the virus that we hear about most often in children who are sick during the winter. However, there are many other cold viruses besides RSV, like the influenza virus, rhinovirus, adenovirus and parainfluenza virus. Even though there are over 200 different cold viruses, they mostly cause the same symptoms in children.

What are the symptoms of the common cold?

The child will usually start showing symptoms one to three days after coming into contact with someone with a cold virus.

Symptoms can include:

- Fussiness
- Runny nose
- Coughing
- Fast breathing
- Fever

Can a viral cold be serious?

Yes. Usually a cold is only a mild illness, but sometimes symptoms can quickly become worse or even life-threatening, especially in very young children.

Children who have asthma, heart disease or were born prematurely are also at a higher risk of needing to go to the hospital because of a cold.

When is the cold season?

Colds are most common during the late fall to early spring but can happen any time of the year.

How easy is it to catch a cold?

A cold is a respiratory infection that spreads by contact with a virus. If someone coughs or sneezes, the virus can spread through direct contact. Some cold viruses can live for several hours on surfaces like hands, countertops or a used tissue.

Colds can spread quickly in crowded households, day care centers or schools. Contrary to common perception, cold air or drafts do not cause colds.

How do I know if my child needs to see a doctor?

You and your child's doctor are partners in the care of your child. Call your doctor right away if your child has any breathing problems. If you are unsure, it is best to call.

How can I protect my child from RSV and other cold viruses?

- The best way to prevent RSV and other cold viruses (including the flu) is to wash your hands regularly. Wash your hands with soap and water before touching your child and ask others to do the same.
- Everyone in your household older than 6 months of age should receive the influenza vaccine every year.
- Do not smoke near your child. Being around tobacco smoke can increase the risk of viral infections.
- Do not share food or drinks.
- Clean and disinfect household surfaces regularly.
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and wash your hands after doing so.
- Keep your child away from anyone who has a cold. This includes other children. Remember that RSV is very common in young children and can easily spread from one child to another.
- Remember that kissing a baby or child can spread a cold or flu virus.
- Stay away from crowds during the cold or RSV season.
- Keep healthy by getting enough sleep, eating healthy food and exercising.



Can an adult get RSV?

Yes. As with all cold viruses, anyone can get RSV: infants, children or adults. In some cases, an adult might only have symptoms like a sore throat or cough. A child can still catch a cold virus that might not make an adult feel sick.

Can you get RSV again if you already had it?

Yes. Someone can have a cold virus like RSV and get it again. Most likely a second viral infection will not be as bad as the first one.

How is a viral cold infection treated?

Infections can be treated at home most of the time. Medicines to help with the fever or pain can be used for a child with a mild infection. These medicines can help to reduce the symptoms, but they will not make the cold go away faster.

Check with your doctor to find out the best medicine to use and how much of it to give.

If the viral infection is severe, the child may need to be admitted to the hospital.

Will my child be given antibiotics for RSV?

There is no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics will not make RSV or any cold virus "get better."