

RSV and flu in infants and young children

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza (flu) are common viruses that affect the lungs and breathing passages of people. Each year in Alaska, lots of babies and young children get very sick and need to be in the hospital when they get RSV or flu.



Children and babies who are at the highest risk are:

- Babies born early
- Babies 1 year old and younger
- Children with problems with their lungs or heart
- Children with weakened immune systems
- Children who have neuromuscular disorders and are weak, especially children who have trouble swallowing or coughing

Early symptoms of RSV and flu:

RSV and flu may not make babies very sick right away, but symptoms can become more severe after a few days into the illness. Early on, your baby could have:

- Runny nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Cough, which may progress to wheezing or difficulty breathing

RSV and flu in babies:

Babies who have RSV or flu can get very sick. Babies who do any of the following should be seen by a health care provider quickly:

- Can't take any breast milk, formula, or Pedialyte for 8 hours because they're too sick
- Can't wake up to feed because they are too sick
- Are breathing more than 60 breaths per minute or they look like they're working hard to breathe
- Have pale or mottled skin

What should you do if you someone in your family is sick?

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer as much as you can.
- Don't touch your face or eyes with your hands.
- Wear a mask if you're sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your arm so you don't spray other people.
- If you're sick, don't be around babies or little kids because you might make them sick too, even if they are your own kids.
- If you're sick, don't go to holiday or other gatherings, as you might make your friends and family sick.
- If your child is sick, don't let them go to school as they might get other kids sick too.
- Adults who are sick should also not go to work or school.
- Get everyone in your family who is older than 6 months of age their yearly flu shot as soon as possible.
- Please try not to smoke around children as this can make RSV and flu symptoms worse.



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