I Tested Positive for RSV. Now What?

If you tested positive for RSV, take the following steps to feel better and avoid spreading RSV to others.

First Steps



- **Gather Your Recovery Essentials:** Ensure you have a thermometer, masks, plenty of fluids, and an over-the-counter pain reliever or fever reducer to manage symptoms, minimize the spread, and aid recovery. Consider informing a healthcare provider to receive specific recommendations based on your symptoms and health history.
- **Let Your Close Contacts Know You Tested Positive for RSV:** Contact those you've recently spent time with and let them know they should stay home and away from others if they experience any RSV symptoms.

Taking Care of Yourself

- **Stay Home and Keep a Distance from Others:** Except for when seeking medical care, stay home and away from others as much as possible, including the people you live with. Prevent the spread of RSV by increasing hygiene measures like covering your cough, frequently washing your hands, sanitizing surfaces, and using an air filter. If you must go out in public, consider wearing a mask, particularly while indoors.
- **Track Your Symptoms:** Monitor how your symptoms progress over the next few days. RSV symptoms for adults may include a runny nose, lower appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, and wheezing. Some adults may have no symptoms at all. Infants and young children with RSV usually show symptoms. In children under six months, RSV symptoms may include irritability and a decrease in eating, drinking, and activity. Most people infected with RSV will experience mild illness and recover within one to two weeks at home. However, infants, young children, older adults, and certain groups are at higher risk for severe RSV disease.
- **Know When to Get Help:** Seek medical care if you or someone you are caring for experiences worsening symptoms, including difficulty breathing and not drinking enough fluids.

Getting Back to Normal

- **Rejoining Normal Activities:** You may go back to normal activities when your RSV symptoms are getting better, and you have not had a fever without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours. For the first five days after returning to normal activities, take more precautions, such as extra handwashing and keeping your distance, especially around young children and older adults.
- **Preventing Future Infections:** Like other respiratory illnesses, RSV spreads in the fall and winter, usually peaking in December and January. Talk to a healthcare provider about receiving an RSV vaccine or antibody if you are: The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American College of Obstetricians

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and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) recommend RSV vaccination as the best way to protect against severe illness and additional trips to the doctor, emergency room, or hospital.

- **Recommendations for Older Adults:** The AAFP recommends that adults ages 75 and older, and adults 50-74 who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease, receive the RSV vaccine at any time of year. There are three single-dose RSV vaccine options available for adults. No additional doses are recommended after the first dose.
- **Recommendations for Pregnant People:** ACOG recommends that pregnant people who are 32 to 36 weeks pregnant between September and March get the RSV vaccine to protect their babies from severe RSV after birth. The RSV vaccine provides the best protection against severe RSV in babies from birth to 6 months old, when a baby's immune system is not ready to develop immunity on its own.
- **Recommendations for Infants:** If the pregnant parent does not receive an RSV vaccination, the AAP recommends that babies ages 8 months and under and born during or near the RSV season, typically between October and March, receive an RSV immunization. Infants and children ages 8 through 19 months who are at high risk of severe RSV and entering their second RSV season should also get an RSV immunization. Monoclonal antibodies from the RSV immunization provide direct and rapid protection; Protect from RSV immunization lasts at least 5 months and is 90% effective at preventing infant hospitalizations.
- **Recommendations for People with Compromised Immune Systems:** IDSA recommends that people with compromised immune systems ages 18 and older receive a single dose of the RSV vaccine. People with compromised immune systems who are ages 18 and under should consult with a healthcare professional through shared clinical decision-making. For all others, frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, sanitizing surfaces, and avoiding direct contact with people when sick can protect you and others against RSV during the peak respiratory illness season.

Sources

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