

**Brief introduction:** Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, by direct contact with someone who has RSV, or by touching a contaminated surface.

For a resource to prepare, respond to, and control respiratory viruses, point your phone's camera at the QR code for CDC's viral respiratory pathogens toolkit for nursing homes.



## Infection Prevention Checklist



- 1. Resident placement and Transmission-Based Precautions:** For residents with suspected or confirmed RSV:
  - Residents should be isolated in their room with the door closed (if safety permits).
    - Use Contact, Droplet, and Standard Precautions for the duration of illness.
    - Place sign outside the room indicating the type of precautions. Examples of signs from CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/media/pdfs/contact-precautions-sign-P.pdf>; <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/media/pdfs/droplet-precautions-sign-P.pdf>
    - Restrict residents to their rooms, except for medically necessary care. Residents should wear a mask if transport outside the room is necessary.
  - Placement in a private room is preferred. If no private rooms exist, group (cohort) residents with the same illness together, considering the presence of other communicable diseases including multidrug-resistant organisms.
    - Consult with local health department and/or VDH Regional Infection Prevention team on cohorting decisions as needed.
  - When entering the room, healthcare personnel should wear all recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) during the care of that resident.
    - Surgical **mask** (use N95 respirator during aerosol-generating procedures), **gown, gloves**
    - Wear eye protection if splashes or sprays are anticipated.
    - Discard PPE after each use.
  - Perform appropriate hand hygiene frequently. Unless hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer is preferred over soap and water in most clinical situations. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- 2. Environmental cleaning and disinfection:** When cleaning resident rooms and common areas, use disinfecting products that are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- 3. Communication:** Notify resident(s) and staff of positive RSV results.
  - Contact your local health department (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/>) if an outbreak is suspected or your facility is experiencing an increase in cases and additional resources are needed.
  - Communicate information about resident's suspected or confirmed RSV status when transferring to other departments within the facility and/or when transferring to another facility.
- 4. Look for more cases:** Conduct active surveillance to promptly detect new cases in residents or staff.
  - Promptly test residents or staff with acute respiratory illness symptoms (e.g., cough, congestion, fever, sneezing, runny nose).

5. **Promote immunization:**
  - a. CDC recommends one-time RSV vaccination for all adults aged 75 years and older and for adults ages 60-74 who are at increased risk of severe RSV. This includes residents of nursing homes.
  - b. For additional vaccine information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/vaccines/index.html>
6. **Employee health:** Staff should report respiratory illness symptoms to designated employee health personnel and stay home when sick. Follow facility policy for return to work.
7. **Respiratory etiquette:**
  - a. Provide adequate supplies (tissues, face masks, trash cans, alcohol-based hand sanitizer) in common areas and resident rooms.
  - b. Post signage or visual alerts to:
    - Encourage visitors to avoid visiting loved ones if they are sick.
    - Describe how to use facemasks or tissues to cover coughs and sneezes.
    - Describe how and when to perform hand hygiene.
8. **Outbreak management:** During a viral respiratory outbreak, follow public health guidance. Refer to CDC viral respiratory pathogens toolkit for steps to control respiratory virus spread: <https://www.cdc.gov/long-term-care-facilities/hcp/respiratory-virus-toolkit/index.html>.

## RSV: How to Share the News



1. **To the resident and family members authorized to receive healthcare information:** You (or your loved one) have tested positive for RSV. We will be taking extra precautions like wearing a mask, gown, and gloves, and giving you care in your room, whenever possible. When you come out of your room, we will have you wear a mask. We will also be washing our hands a lot and encourage you to do the same.
2. **To healthcare workers:** This resident is now positive for RSV and requires contact and droplet precautions. Before entering the resident's room, remember to wear all recommended personal protective equipment (gown, gloves, and mask; use N95 respirator instead of a mask if an aerosol-generating procedure is occurring). Add eye protection if splashes or sprays are anticipated, and always perform good hand hygiene. Please make sure that the correct signage is in place to help keep everyone safe.

## Additional Resources



CDC – RSV webpage, including clinical guidance and vaccination information:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>

VDH – Respiratory Illnesses in Virginia webpage – RSV fact sheet, prevention strategies, communication materials: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/respiratory-diseases-in-virginia/>