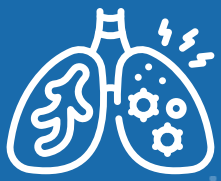


DISEASE 101:
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

SABIN VACCINE INSTITUTE

What is RSV?



Respiratory syncytial virus, commonly known as RSV, is a virus that infects cells along the human respiratory tract, from the nose to the lungs. It can cause respiratory disease ranging from mild to life-threatening.

Did You Know?

The World Health Organization recommends that people in the third trimester of pregnancy receive an RSV vaccine, which should protect both them and the baby for approximately six months after birth.

FOR ADULTS, THERE ARE CURRENTLY 3 U.S. FDA-LICENSED RSV VACCINES AVAILABLE



Unfortunately, these vaccines are currently not affordable for most low-and middle-income countries, meaning many children who need them most may not be able to receive these preventative shots.

Disease Transmission

RSV is transmitted from person to person via respiratory particles in the air or potentially direct contact with an infected person.



Symptoms

Symptoms may differ depending on if the virus causes an upper or lower respiratory tract illness.

Upper respiratory illness symptoms include:


RUNNY NOSE


HEADACHE


SORE THROAT


FATIGUE


FEVER

Lower respiratory tract infection symptoms include:


COUGH


SHORTNESS OF BREATH


FAST BREATHING


WHEEZING


MUSCLE SPASMS AROUND AIRWAYS

By the Numbers

Each year, this disease causes more than 3.6 million hospitalizations and about 100,000 deaths globally in children under 5 years old. Most of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries where health care services are limited.



3.6 million
hospitalizations



100,000
deaths

Source: WHO and CDC | Updated: June 2026