



MONO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Increased Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Activity Detected in Mono County

Parents Asked to Monitor Children for Symptoms

MONO COUNTY, Calif. (NOVEMBER 08, 2022) – As we head into the winter months, we’re beginning to see a dramatic increase in Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) disease activity both throughout the United States, and locally in Mono County. RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can be serious, especially for infants and older adults. Children are often exposed to and infected with RSV outside the home, such as in school or childcare centers, and then transmit the virus to other members within the home. Mono County Public Health urges parents to monitor for symptoms of RSV in their children.

“We’re currently experiencing a surge in RSV, and urge parents to take precautions to protect their children from the virus,” said Dr. Caryn Slack, MD, MPH, Mono County Health Officer. “A triple threat of Flu, COVID-19, and RSV is expected this fall and winter, and simple proactive measures can help prevent and reduce local spread.”

RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children younger than 1 year of age in the United States.

The symptoms of RSV include:

- **Mild cold symptoms** like congestion, runny nose, fever, cough, and sore throat. Very young infants may be irritable, fatigued and have breathing difficulties. Normally these symptoms will clear up on their own in a few days.
- **A barking or wheezing cough** can be one of the first signs of a more serious illness. In these instances, the virus has spread to the lower respiratory tract, causing inflammation of the small airways entering the lungs. This can lead to pneumonia or bronchiolitis.

- **Infants with severe RSV** will have short, shallow, and rapid breathing. This can be identified by “caving-in” of the chest in between the ribs and under the ribs (chest wall retractions), “spreading-out” of the nostrils with every breath (nasal flaring), and abnormally fast breathing. In addition, their mouth, lips and fingernails may turn a bluish color due to lack of oxygen.

There are steps that can be taken to help prevent the spread of RSV. Specifically, if you have cold-like symptoms you should:

- Stay home whenever possible;
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or upper shirtsleeves, avoiding your hands;
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Avoid close contact and direct contact with others; and,
- Clean frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and mobile devices.

People infected with RSV are usually contagious for three to eight days, and may become contagious a day or two before they start showing signs of illness. However, some infants, and people with weakened immune systems, can continue to spread the virus even after they stop showing symptoms, for as long as four weeks.

RSV can survive for many hours on hard surfaces such as tables and crib rails. It typically lives on soft surfaces such as tissues and hands for shorter amounts of time.

People are typically infected with RSV for the first time as an infant or toddler, and nearly all children are infected before their second birthday. However, repeat infections may occur throughout life, and people of any age can be infected. Infections in healthy children and adults are generally less severe than among infants and older adults with certain medical conditions.

Call your doctor if you or your child is having trouble breathing, a poor appetite, decreased activity level, cold symptoms that become severe, or a shallow cough that continues throughout the day and night.

For more information, questions, or concerns, please call Mono County Public Health at (760) 924-1830 or follow up with your pediatrician or medical provider.