



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### RSV Prevention

Respiratory Syncytial Virus Activity — United States, July 2007–November 2008

Recorded: December 16, 2008; posted: January 1, 2009

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Susan Laird] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Susan Laird, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is one of the most common causes of respiratory illness in both children and adults. Infants are most susceptible to the disease, and each year up to 125,000 children less than a year old are hospitalized with RSV.

Catherine Panozzo is a researcher for CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss how to prevent RSV. Welcome to the show, Cathy.

[Catherine Panozzo] Thank you for having me.

[Susan Laird] Cathy, how is RSV transmitted?

[Catherine Panozzo] RSV is spread two major ways. It can be spread into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes and someone nearby breathes in that air. It can also be spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the droplet lands on a surface, such as a countertop, and another person touches that surface and then touches their eyes or nose.

[Susan Laird] What are the symptoms of RSV?

[Catherine Panozzo] RSV generally looks like any other cold-like illness, and symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and sneezing. RSV can also infect the lower respiratory tract and people can develop wheezing or have difficulty breathing.

[Susan Laird] Is RSV more likely to occur during any particular time of the year?

[Catherine Panozzo] Yes. RSV typically occurs during the fall, winter, and spring months. However, there's substantial variation by geographic location and also by year. For instance, in the south, the RSV season tends to start earlier than in the rest of the country, and the RSV season starts particularly early in Florida.

[Susan Laird] Why are infants most susceptible to RSV?

[Catherine Panozzo] Infants are more susceptible to serious disease because their immune system is immature.

[Susan Laird] Is there a vaccine for this disease?

Catherine Panozzo] There's no vaccine for RSV yet. However, there is a drug called Palivizumab that certain high-risk infants can receive monthly during the RSV season.

[Susan Laird] What is the treatment for RSV?

[Catherine Panozzo] There's no specific treatment for RSV. Care is supportive. For instance, children that may be hospitalized might receive supplemental oxygen to assist with their breathing. There are several simple things you can do to prevent RSV infection. People that have cold-like symptoms, for instance, should cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze and also wash their hands frequently. Wiping down countertops is also a good preventive measure.

[Susan Laird] Where can listeners get more information about preventing RSV?

[Catherine Panozzo] Listeners can visit [www.cdc.gov/RSV](http://www.cdc.gov/RSV) for more information.

[Susan Laird] Thanks, Cathy.

I've been talking today with Catherine Panozzo, a respiratory disease specialist, about preventing respiratory syncytial virus. She reminds us that good personal hygiene, such as covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and washing hands will go a very long way to prevent RSV

Until next time, be well. This is Susan Laird for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.