

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Definition:

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a contagious viral respiratory illness. It can cause mild to severe illness, and can lead to death.

Signs and symptoms:

Symptoms of RSV include a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose, and wheezing.

Transmission:

RSV is transmitted from person to person mainly by droplets when people with the virus cough, sneeze or talk. It is also possible to get RSV from touching a surface that has virus on it, and then touching your own mouth or nose. Most people may be able to infect others for 3-8 days after becoming sick.

Diagnosis:

RSV is diagnosed through a lab test. The most common types of tests available are:

- Rapid tests – quick turn-around (usually 20 minutes), and sensitivity generally ranges from 80-90%. The rapid test is generally reliable in young children but less useful in older children and adults
- PCR - longer turn-around time (usually around 48 hours) but has very few false positives or false negatives.

Role of the School Nurse:

Prevention

- Provide training and resources for staff and students on the following: (posters available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/order-form-wn.shtml>)
 - Hand washing
 - Respiratory etiquette (covering cough)
 - Staying home when ill

Treatment Recommendations

- There is no specific treatment for RSV infection.
- Palivizumab is a drug that can be administered to high risk infants and young children who are at high risk of severe RSV. It is a monthly intramuscular injection during the RSV season.

Exclusions

- It is recommended that any child with a fever of 100° F or greater should be excluded from school, please follow your individual schools guidelines.

Reporting Requirements

- Individual cases of RSV are not reportable
- Any sudden increase of respiratory illness (within a classroom, wing etc) should be considered a potential outbreak and should be reported.
- If your school has greater than 15% absenteeism this should be reported through the NEO 15% absentee application.

Resources:

- Maine DOE website <http://www.maine.gov/education/sh/>
- Federal CDC RSV website <http://www.cdc.gov/rsv>