

**Information & Advice for Parents
& Relatives on Respiratory
Syncytial Virus (RSV)
(Bronchiolitis)**

Infection Prevention Team

This information leaflet has been designed to help you understand the condition that has made your child unwell.

The name of the virus that may have caused your child's respiratory illness is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

The symptoms of RSV are:-

- Increased rate of breathing (which may be wheezy and crackly)
- Coughing
- Increased secretion of mucus (runny nose, phlegm)
- Raised temperature
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in eating and drinking

RSV is common in children and most have had it by the time they are two. RSV can also cause infection in adults, but the condition is usually much milder as their lungs and airways are larger and able to cope better. Most children recover from the illness within a matter of days, however, a small number of children have to be hospitalised. If admitted to hospital your child will be nursed in a single room.

When admitted to the ward, your child will have a sample of the mucus sent to the laboratory where it is checked for RSV. The sample is collected from the back of the nose using a small suction tube. It is not pleasant for your child, but it only takes a few seconds. It is important to obtain a specimen in this way to diagnose RSV and exclude other illnesses.

Antibiotics are not effective against viruses, so the treatment of RSV is normally purely supportive, by:-

- Monitoring your child's body oxygen levels (using a special monitor which slips on to your child's finger a bit like a clothes peg). When oxygen levels are low, oxygen may be given either via a mask, nasal tubing or, for babies, through a head box.
- Gentle suction of the secretions (mucus, phlegm) to help keep the airways clear.
- Administration of infant paracetamol to keep temperature down.
- Possibly temporary feeding through a naso-gastric tube (nose down to tummy) if your child is unable to eat.
- Possibly ventilation (only occasionally required)

You can help the nursing staff to care for your child by;

- Comforting and encouraging your child to keep as calm as possible, and to keep the oxygen on when required.
- Keeping your child in the cubicle or bay and washing your hands before and after visiting. (RSV can be spread to other children on the ward who may not have had or may be particularly susceptible to infection).

Please do not hesitate to ask if you are worried about any aspect of your child's care. We understand that this can be an extremely distressing time for parents, but the illness is usually short-lived and without major complication.

Where can I get more information?

Further information is available from the **Infection Prevention Team**. If you wish to see any of them, please ask the ward staff to contact them.

INFECTION PREVENTION TEAM

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