



RSV Update for Healthcare Providers – February 22, 2017

ALL MEDICAL PROVIDERS: PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS UPDATE IS ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE. IT CONTAINS MULTIPLE WEBSITE LINKS TO IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS SUCH AS CLINICAL GUIDANCE, LABORATORY FORMS, AND REPORTING FORMS. THIS DIGITAL DOCUMENT CAN BE FOUND AT <http://humboldt.gov/2237>

BACKGROUND

- Since January 2017, Public Health has received more reports than is typical of screening tests positive for Respiratory Syncytial Viral Infection (RSV) from the community and hospitals.
- Although typically a disease of children, anecdotal reports suggest that RSV is also occurring in the adult population. The Humboldt County Public Health Laboratory has confirmed RSV in 2 adults, which is significant given the infrequency of testing in this population.
- Although presentation of RSV can appear similar to pertussis, Public Health has had no laboratory evidence of pertussis in Humboldt this year or in 2016.

SYMPTOMS

- RSV can cause upper and lower respiratory tract infections.
- Adults generally experience some combination of runny nose, sore throat, cough, headache, fatigue and fever with symptoms lasting fewer than 5 days.
- In infants, RSV can cause a wider variety of symptoms. Cold-like symptoms are most common, typically beginning with a runny nose and decreased appetite followed by some combination of cough, sneezing fever and wheezing. However, RSV can also cause bronchitis, croup, bronchiolitis and pneumonia and can become severe. In very young infants, irritability, decreased activity and apnea may be the only symptoms.
- People of any age are susceptible to RSV but severity increases with medical co-morbidities: advanced age, COPD, asthma, immune suppression, etc.

WHAT PROVIDERS SHOULD DO

- There is no specific treatment for RSV. The goal is to recognize infants and older, compromised patients in need of hospitalization, and to minimize spread.
- Consider a diagnosis of RSV in an individual of any age presenting with bronchiolitis or new onset asthma.
- The virus is highly contagious. Remind your clients to always wash hands with warm water and soap, especially just before holding a baby. RSV can survive on hard surfaces such as tables and crib rails for many hours, and can live on soft surfaces such as tissues and hands for shorter amounts of time.
- Encourage your families to limit the spread of infection. Stay home and keep children home if symptomatic.
- Premature infants, children younger than 2 years of age with congenital heart or chronic lung disease, and children with compromised (weakened) immune systems due to a medical condition



or medical treatment are at highest risk for severe disease. Adults with compromised immune systems and those 65 and older are also at increased risk of severe disease.

- Testing is available through Public Health, please call 707-268-2179 for details.

