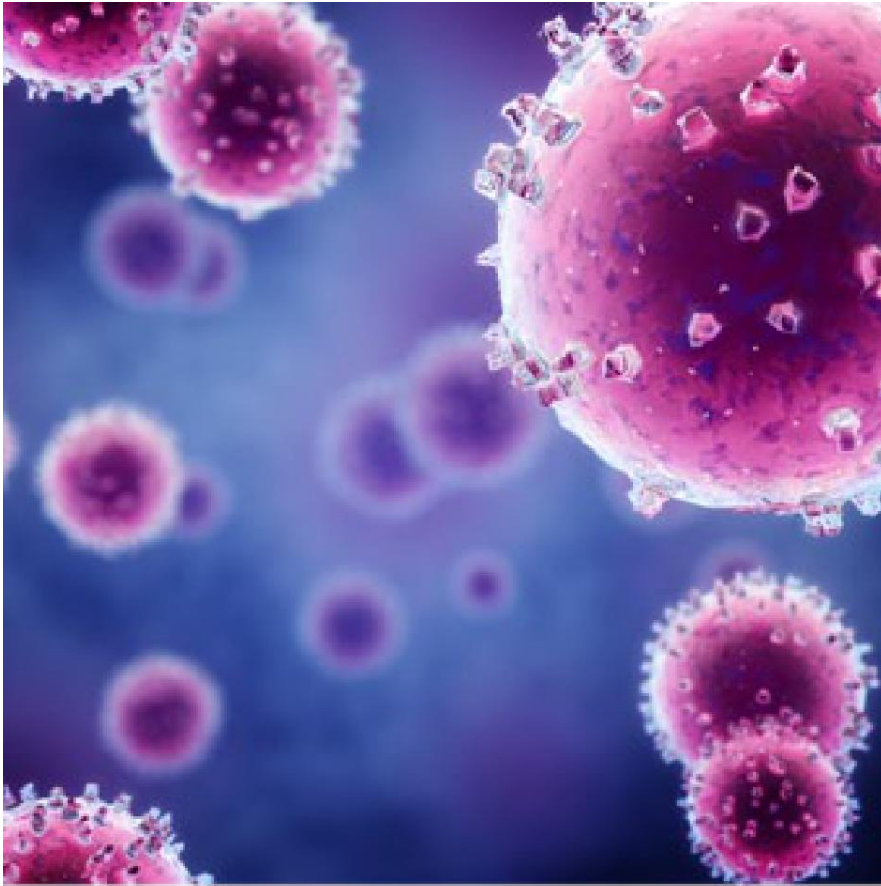




Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)



Overview

This is a virus that infects the lungs and airways. For most people an infection isn't dangerous. But for babies, the elderly, and for people who have a weakened immune system, infections can be severe.

Causes

RSV spreads from person to person, often through coughs and sneezes. You can be exposed to the virus if you have close contact with an infected person, or if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth. RSV infections are common. Most everyone will have an RSV infection by the time they are two years old.

Symptoms

For most people, an RSV infection causes only mild symptoms. These include a mild fever, coughing, wheezing, runny nose, and sneezing. It can also cause a loss of appetite. A severe infection can cause fever, and a severe cough. It causes wheezing and rapid, shallow breathing. Skin may turn a bluish color. An infant with an infection may be fussy and tired, and may not want to feed. They may have breathing problems, including coughing and short, shallow, rapid breaths.

Treatment

Typically, an infection lasts for a week or two and then goes away on its own. But people with severe infections (most often babies and the elderly) may need to be hospitalized so they can get oxygen and fluid therapy. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.