

A B C D E F G H Children's Health

Educating Parents About RSV Reducing The Leading Cause Of Hospitalization For Children Under The Age Of One

(NAPSA)—Whether they want a boy or a girl, most parents wish for a healthy child.

While parents can't protect their children from every health risk, they can help prevent a serious childhood illness known as Respiratory Syncytial Virus or RSV. According to a recent study, RSV was the leading cause of infant hospitalizations for three consecutive years.

"The study confirms what we have long suspected: RSV is a serious pediatric healthcare issue and not to be taken lightly," said Dr. Paula Elbirt, a pediatric pulmonologist and Medical Director of Children's Aid Society. "Education about RSV and ways to help prevent it is extremely important."

RSV is a common lower respiratory tract infection. Premature babies and infants with chronic lung conditions are at increased risk for complications from serious RSV disease.

The symptoms of RSV may be similar to a cold at first and can include fever, runny nose, and other cold-like symptoms. An infected baby may get sick very quickly.

Symptoms may include: coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing (a whistling sound), rapid breathing, and inability to eat.

Since RSV complications can strike rapidly, parents of at-risk children need to act fast by calling their pediatrician or healthcare provider immediately if signs of RSV complications appear.

Parents of at-risk infants can help reduce their baby's risk of exposure to the RSV virus by:

- Requiring family members and caregivers to always wash their hands with warm water and soap before touching the baby.

- Limiting the baby's exposure to people with cold symptoms or fevers—No kissing the baby and avoid visits from people with colds



The best time to learn about RSV is before your child is hospitalized to treat the disease.

during RSV season, which generally runs from the fall through the spring.

- Keeping the baby away from crowded places such as shopping malls and family gatherings.

- Never smoking around the baby.

- Consulting your child's pediatrician about RSV risks and prevention.

There is a medication, Synagis (palivizumab) that is approved for preventing serious complications from RSV disease in certain pediatric patients under 2 years old at the start of RSV season. The drug is given through an injection, administered once every month during RSV season. The most frequently reported adverse events potentially related to Synagis were fever, nervousness and injection-site reaction. Adverse events that occurred in greater than one percent of the Synagis group and for which the incidence was greater than one percent higher than in the placebo group included upper respiratory infection, otitis media, rhinitis, rash, pain, hernia, increase in SGOT and pharyngitis.

For more information about RSV, call 1-877-848-8512, visit the PreemieCare Web site at www.MOSTonline.org or visit www.rsvprotection.com.