

SYMPTOMS

- Wheezing is a high-pitched whistling or squeaky door sound produced during breathing out.
- Rapid breathing with a rate over 40-60 breaths per minute.
- Retractions during breathing is when the ribcage is very prominently seen during breathing.
- Fever and profuse nasal drainage.
- Coughing which may sound “wet/productive.”

CAUSE

Bronchiolitis results in wheezing and profuse nasal drainage. The wheezing is caused by a narrowing of the smallest airways in the lung. This narrowing results from inflammation caused by a number of viruses, with the most common being Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

RSV occurs in epidemics almost every winter. Whereas infants less than 2 yrs with RSV develop bronchiolitis, adults and children over 5 years typically develop cold symptoms.

The virus is found in the nasal secretions of the infected individual. It is spread by sneezing or coughing at a range of less than 6 feet, and by hand-to-nose or hand-to-eye contact. Unfortunately, people do not develop permanent immunity to the virus.

EXPECTED COURSE

At the beginning of the illness, most infants and toddler appear to have mild cold symptoms. In 2-3 days, there will be a sudden increase of nasal secretions that are very thick and difficult to clear. After 3-4 days, there will be an onset of cough which then develops into wheezing. Overall, the wheezing lasts for approximately 7-9 days. The symptoms of coughing and wheezing will often worsen during the middle of the illness. Most of the time, there is no significant improvement of symptoms until 7-9 days of the illness.

The most common complication of bronchiolitis is an ear infection, which occurs in 20% of the infants. Bacterial pneumonia is an uncommon complication.

Approximately 1-2% of infants and toddlers may require hospitalization because they need supplemental oxygen and intravenous fluids.

About 30% of the infants who develop bronchiolitis may develop asthma. Recurrences of wheezing occur mainly in children who come from families where a close relative has asthma. Asthma

is very treatable with medication and most children are able to participate in various athletic programs.

HOME TREATMENT

Treatment of RSV bronchiolitis depends on the child's main symptoms.

- 1. For a Runny Nose with Profuse Discharge, Blow or Suction the Nose.** Remember that nasal mucus and discharge are the body's way of washing viruses out of the nose and sinuses. Blowing the nose is all that is needed. For younger babies, use a soft rubber suction bulb to remove the secretions gently. You can also apply petroleum jelly or Aquaphor to the nasal openings to protect them from irritation (cleanse the skin first).
- 2. For a Blocked Nose, Use Nasal Washes.** This is especially important as a young infant cannot nurse or drink from a bottle unless the nose is open. Warm water or saline nose drops followed by rubber bulb suction will open most blocked noses. Repeat until clear.
Most stuffy noses are blocked by dried mucus. Suction alone or blowing the nose cannot remove it. Neither can medicines. Saline nasal drops are made by adding ½ teaspoon of salt to 1 cup (8 oz) of warm water. Make a fresh amount daily. If the air in your home is dry, use a cool mist humidifier.
- 3. Fever.** For fever > 101 , use acetaminophen every 4 to 6 hours. Aspirin should be avoided because of the possible link with Reye's Syndrome.
- 4. Cough.** Coughing spasms are often caused by sticky secretions in the back of the throat. Warm fluids usually relax the airway and loosen secretions. In addition, breathing warm moist air helps to loosen the sticky mucus that may be choking your child.
- 5. Medication.** Some children with bronchiolitis respond to asthma medicines. Your child may be sent home with a nebulizer machine to assist with administering the medicines as directed by your doctor.

**CALL OUR OFFICE 972-608-0774
Immediately if**

- Breathing is labored with more retractions.
- Breathing faster than 60 breaths/minute.
- Your child stops drinking fluids, and has no urine output in 8-10 hours.