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# Florida Department of Health Addresses Respiratory Syncytial Virus in Florida

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**Miami, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health (Department) is monitoring an above average number of cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Florida communities. This common respiratory virus may cause a higher number of pediatric emergency department visits compared to previous years.

RSV is an infection of the lungs and respiratory tract with symptoms similar to a common cold. Mild case symptoms can include congested or runny nose, dry cough, low-grade fever, sore throat, sneezing, and headache. In severe cases, RSV symptoms may include fever, cough, wheezing, rapid or difficulty breathing, or bluish skin color.

Follow these important steps to protect yourself and others from respiratory illness:
1. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
4. Stay home if you are sick and keep children home if they are sick.
5. Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

Infants are the most affected by RSV. Symptoms of severe cases in infants are short, shallow, and rapid breathing, struggling to breathe, cough, poor feeding, unusual tiredness, or irritability.

Most children and adults recover in one to two weeks, although some might have repeated wheezing. Severe or life-threatening infection requiring a hospital stay may occur in premature infants or in anyone who has chronic heart or lung problems.

For more information, please visit the Florida Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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**About the Florida Department of Health**

The Department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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