

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Protecting Babies from RSV During the Holiday Season

As the holiday season begins, it's a wonderful time for friends and family to gather and celebrate. To keep the season enjoyable and stay healthy, it's important for everyone to be aware of respiratory syncytial virus or RSV. According to the CDC, RSV is a common respiratory infection that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms and is commonly spread beginning in the late fall through early spring. While RSV generally doesn't cause severe illness in healthy adults and children, it can cause infants to contract bronchitis or pneumonia and is the most common cause of hospitalization in children under the age of one year.

RSV can spread through exposure to virus droplets from a cough or sneeze, direct contact with the virus such as someone with RSV kissing a baby's face, or touching a surface that has the virus and then touching your face before washing your hands.

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers several key prevention strategies to keep babies healthy this holiday season:

- **Get the RSV vaccine.** The RSV immunization can be given through the maternal RSV vaccine during pregnancy or infants can be immunized after they are born. Adults over the age of sixty can also get the RSV vaccine.
- **Limit baby's exposure** to large crowds and people with cold symptoms.
- **Wash your hands.** Use good handwashing hygiene and remind children to do the same. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap is not available
- **Feed your baby breastmilk.** It contains antibodies that have been shown to prevent and lessen the severity of RSV symptoms.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces.

For more information on RSV, visit healthychildren.org or contact Michelle Broxterman, mbroxterman@ksu.edu, (620)724-8233

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