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As Respiratory Illnesses in Children Increase, Riverside County Health Officials Urge Safety Measures

Riverside County Public Health Officer Geoffrey Leung is urging parents to take the necessary precautions to protect their children as officials see an increase in influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in young children.

“It’s that time of year and we are seeing children in Riverside County, some younger than 2 years old, who are sick with colds and coughs and some with RSV. While RSV is a common respiratory virus, it can make young children quite ill. So, we are asking that parents do what they can to prevent kids from getting sick,” said Dr. Leung.

Dr. Leung noted the following recommendations will help prevent the spread of RSV and other diseases:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Keep children home when sick.

Voluntary masking when indoors in schools and in public places provides protection from respiratory illnesses like RSV, Dr. Leung advised. And masking of adults around very young children (particularly those born prematurely) may also help to reduce the risk of RSV transmission.

Additionally, Public Health recommends that everyone 6 months and older receive an influenza vaccination to protect against seasonal illness.

RSV typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can be particularly serious for infants and older adults. It is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children younger than 1 year old in the United States.

Symptoms of RSV can include shallow or difficulty breathing, cough, poor appetite, listlessness or irritability and it can cause bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs).

Residents are advised to call their healthcare provider and seek immediate medical attention if a child or anyone is having difficulty breathing.

For a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), click [here](#).

To learn more, visit Riverside University Health System Public Health's Disease Control branch at <https://www.ruhealth.org/public-health/disease-control> or call 951.358.5107.

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