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Riverside County child dies from RSV-associated illness

An eastern Riverside County child under the age of 4 has died after contracting a respiratory illness that is possibly linked to Respiratory Syncytial Virus, or RSV, health officials reported today.

“The loss of a child is devastating and all of Public Health sends it heartfelt condolences to the family, loved ones and anyone impacted by this tragic event,” said Dr. Geoffrey Leung, public health officer for Riverside County.

The name of the child and city of residence are not being released. The child died at a local hospital after a short illness.

Leung urges parents to take the necessary precautions to protect their children as officials see an increase in influenza and RSV in young children. He 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.
- Consider indoor masking.

- Disinfect frequently used surfaces.

There is a medicine that can help protect some babies at high risk for severe RSV disease. Healthcare providers usually give this medicine (called palivizumab) to very premature infants and young children with certain heart and lung conditions as a series of monthly shots during RSV season. If you are concerned about your child's risk for severe RSV infection, talk to your child's healthcare provider.

RSV typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can be particularly serious for infants and older adults each winter. The RSV season typically lasts from November to March, but this year began early and seems to be affecting more kids than previous seasons. 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 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).

The RSV-associated pediatric death is the first reported in Riverside County and underscores the early onset of what is expected to be an active winter season countywide for influenza, COVID and other respiratory illnesses.

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) about RSV, 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](tel:951.358.5107).

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