



Public Health Notice

February 8, 2010

Increased Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Activity in Southern Nevada

The Southern Nevada Health District has identified a recent increase in reports of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Clark County. For the week ending February 6, 2010, 80 cases of RSV were reported, the highest reported total since February of 2009, the last time widespread RSV activity was identified in Southern Nevada. This increase is not unexpected, as widespread RSV activity typically occurs in the months of January and February. Although influenza A H1N1 continues to circulate in the community, it has returned to background levels and is only responsible for a small proportion of respiratory disease in the community at this time.

Most often, RSV typically causes a mild upper respiratory illness with rhinorrhea, cough, and fever. However, premature and very young infants, infants with chronic lung or congenital heart conditions, and persons with suppressed immune systems have a greater chance of having a more severe infection, such as croup, bronchitis, bronchiolitis, or pneumonia. Uncomplicated cases typically resolve within five days, and most cases are not sufficiently severe to require medical care. Treatment of RSV is supportive, including in severe cases.

There is no vaccine for RSV, and infections can generally be prevented by hand washing and droplet precautions. Palivizumab is an FDA-approved monoclonal antibody that reduces hospitalizations due to RSV infection among children; it should only be considered for high-risk infants and children as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. It can be used to prevent serious illness, but it cannot prevent RSV infection or be used to treat children who have already developed severe disease. More information is available in the American Academy of Pediatrics Red Book (28th edition, 2009) and on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/rsv/clinical/prophylaxis.html>.

The health district will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates to clinicians as necessary.