

RSV AWARENESS: *A National Poll of Parents & Health Care Providers*

Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is far from the common cold. It can lead to hospitalization, lifelong health complications or even death for infants and young children. **In fact, it is the leading cause of hospitalization in children younger than one.**

Yet a national poll of parents and specialty health care providers reveals a startling divide in attitudes toward the virus. While both groups acknowledge RSV as a significant concern, the two populations vary widely in their reported ability to meet RSV's threat head-on. Health care providers vigilantly

monitor for the virus, which they report seeing regularly in their practices. Parents, however, feel unequipped to protect their young children.

Meanwhile, specialty health care providers overwhelmingly report that health plan rules and insurance denials block vulnerable infants' access to preventive RSV treatment. Such barriers can put unprepared parents at a double disadvantage. The survey does suggest, however, that education can embolden parents to seek more information about RSV and take steps to protect their children.

KEY FINDINGS

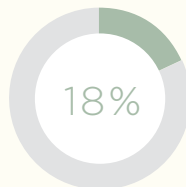
Preparedness

Parents of children age four and under report that understanding of RSV is lacking. That leaves them less than fully prepared to prevent their young children from catching the virus.

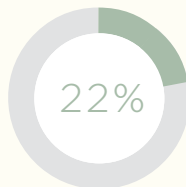
Specialty health care providers reiterated these concerns; 70% agreed that parents of their patients have a low awareness of RSV. Meanwhile, specialty health care providers themselves actively monitor for RSV. They reported that:

PARENTS

Only 18% said parents know “a lot” about RSV, reflecting an awareness level that's roughly half that of the flu

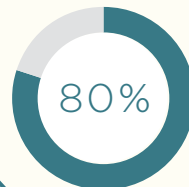


Only 22% of parents consider themselves “very well prepared” to prevent RSV.

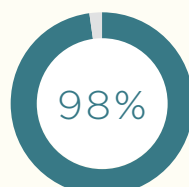


SPECIALTY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

They treat RSV as a priority, “often” or “always” evaluating their patients (80% doctors; 78% nurses)



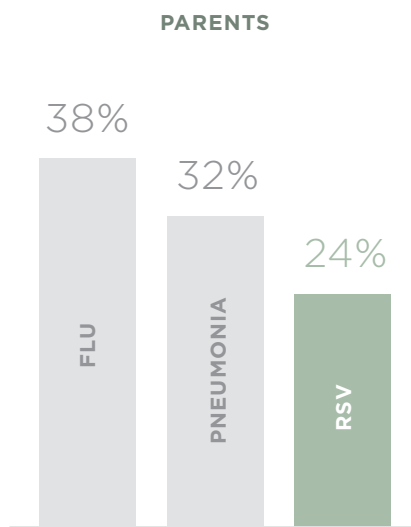
During RSV season, they are especially vigilant about monitoring patients for symptoms or risk factors for RSV (98%).



Perceived Health Threat

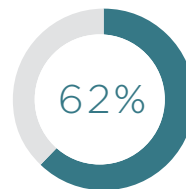
Despite their lack of preparedness, parents do recognize RSV as a serious threat to their young children. Parents reported that:

- **RSV is the third most concerning illness** for their children (24%)
- As a concerning illness, **RSV ranks behind only the flu (38%) and pneumonia (32%).**

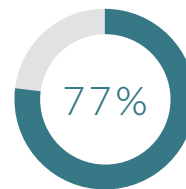


Specialty health care providers discern an even greater risk. Moreover, they see RSV's threat for infants and young children materialize on a regular basis. They reported that:

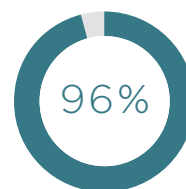
SPECIALTY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS



They “always” or “often” see cases of RSV in their practice (62%)



RSV is the “most serious and dangerous” illness for children under four (77%), ranking even higher than the flu or pneumonia

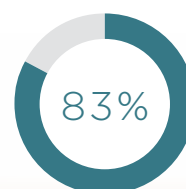


RSV is the “most serious and dangerous” illness for premature babies (96%).

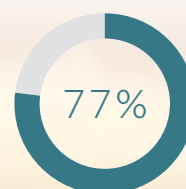
Barriers to Treatment

Parents' lack of awareness may put their children at a disadvantage. More than half of parents (62%) reported that they have never asked their doctor or pharmacist about preventive RSV treatment.

Lack of awareness may also leave parents unprepared for an added challenge—fighting for their children's access to preventive RSV treatment. Specialty health care providers reported that:



Health plan coverage rules can **prevent at-risk infants from receiving RSV prophylaxis** (83%)

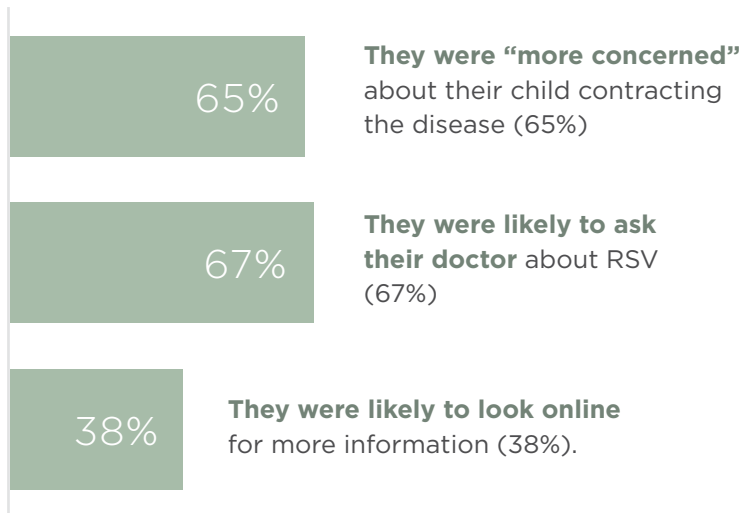


Barriers to access and denials from insurance companies **limit patients' ability to get preventive RSV treatment** (77%).

Education & Awareness

Parents are open to learning more about RSV, the survey indicates. In fact, increased understanding of the disease may spur parents to look for ways to protect their children.

After hearing key statistics about RSV and its impact, parents said:



Parents demonstrated a significant interest in disease prevention. When presented with the future possibility of an RSV vaccine for pregnant mothers, 83% said they would "probably" or "definitely" take the vaccine if they were pregnant and the vaccine were available. Notably, this response was higher than the 66% who said they would "probably" or "definitely" take a flu vaccine while pregnant.

Surveillance

Specialty health care providers overwhelmingly acknowledge the importance of robust RSV surveillance. In October 2009, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stopped requiring states to report cases of RSV. However:



Increased understanding of the disease MAY SPUR PARENTS TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN.

CONCLUSIONS

The National Coalition for Infant Health’s poll confirms that RSV is a serious, demonstrated threat to infants and young children.

While responses suggest that parents need more information about RSV, the survey also indicates that educating parents can encourage them to learn more and to take steps to protect their children.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Specialty Health Care Providers (N=175)

Specialty

- 16% Neonatologist**
- 18% NICU Nurse**
- 15% Neonatal Nurse Practitioner**
- 29% Pediatric Pulmonologist**
- 22% Respiratory Therapist**

Time in Practice

- 2% Less than 1 year**
- 17% 1-5 years**
- 23% 6-10 years**
- 16% 11-15 years**
- 13% 16-20 years**
- 29% More than 20 years**



*Parents of Children 4 and Under (N=600)
Including N=60 First-Time Expectant Parents*

Age

- 17% 18 to 24**
- 52% 25 to 34**
- 24% 35 to 44**
- 7% 45+**

Gender

- 47% Male**
- 53% Female**

Race

- 14% African American or Black**
- 67% White**
- 11% Hispanic or Latino American**
- 5% Asian American**
- 2% American Indian**

NCfIH National Coalition for Infant Health

Protecting Access for Premature Infants through Age Two

The National Coalition for Infant Health educates and advocates on behalf of premature infants from birth to age two. NCfIH envisions safe, healthy infants whose families can access the information, care and treatment their babies need.



InfantHealth.org



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