



# WHAT YOUR PATIENTS 60 YEARS AND OLDER NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RSV

A discussion guide to help start the conversation today.

As a healthcare provider, you are a **trusted source** of information for your patients. Use this guide to optimize conversations with your patients about their risk of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), the potential severity of RSV consequences, and ways to help protect against RSV.

**4 KEY TECHNIQUES** to help increase your patients' receptivity while maintaining trust:

**1** Introduce RSV and personalize the risk



**2** Address common misconceptions and concerns



**3** Treat your patients' questions as invitations to initiate conversation



**4** Talk to your patients about RSV vaccination



## 1. INTRODUCE RSV AND PERSONALIZE THE RISK IN WAYS YOUR PATIENTS WILL UNDERSTAND.

**Talk with your patients about why their age alone is a risk factor:**

"As you age, your immune system may decline and not be as strong as it once was.<sup>1,2</sup> This is why age may contribute to a more serious case of RSV, in addition to other risk factors like underlying medical conditions including chronic heart and lung disease."<sup>1</sup>

**Explain that, for some, RSV isn't just a cold:**

"RSV is a common cause of severe respiratory illness that's highly contagious and can affect your lungs and breathing passages. RSV can start out like a mild cold and, for some, quickly progress to serious breathing issues or pneumonia, which may require hospitalization."<sup>1,3</sup>

**Help your patients understand that, like influenza, RSV can lead to serious consequences:**

"Like the flu, RSV can be serious in older adults. Severe RSV can lead to hospitalization and even death."<sup>1,4,5</sup>

## 2. ADDRESS COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT RSV.

**RSV only affects babies and children; as an older adult, I don't need to be concerned.**

"You're right that RSV is a concern for babies and young children, but it's also a risk for older adults.<sup>1,6,7</sup> Each year, it's estimated that more older adults are hospitalized with RSV than children younger than 5 years.<sup>4</sup> As we age, all of us experience a decline in our ability to fight off viruses like RSV, and older adults have a higher risk of potentially serious RSV infection."<sup>1,2</sup>

**I feel healthy, and I don't have any medical conditions; I'm not at risk for RSV.**

"It's true that people with chronic heart and lung conditions are at an increased risk of severe RSV, but they aren't the only ones.<sup>1,6,7</sup> Older adults, especially those 65 years and older, are also at higher risk because their immune systems start to decline, increasing risks of infections."<sup>1,2</sup>

### 3. TREAT YOUR PATIENTS' QUESTIONS AS INVITATIONS TO INITIATE CONVERSATION.



Some patients may just need clarity. If a patient asks a question, keep in mind that they may simply need more information or reassurance.

The 4 steps of motivational interviewing can help to build rapport:

- ✓ **Affirm your patient's concerns:**  
"These are valid questions, and I appreciate that you've put a lot of thought into this."
- ✓ **Ask nonjudgmental questions to explore your patient's concerns:**  
"Can you tell me a little more about your concerns?"
- ✓ **Ask permission before sharing additional information:**  
"Would it be okay if I shared some more information about RSV with you?"
- ✓ **Summarize and personalize what you've said, emphasizing patient autonomy:**  
"Given your age, RSV can be a real threat with potentially serious consequences. I recommend protecting yourself against RSV with vaccination and am happy to discuss it with you."

### 4. TALK TO YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT RSV VACCINATION.

There are finally vaccines that may help reduce the burden of RSV in your older adult patients, including those with certain underlying medical conditions. Consider an RSV vaccine as part of their health plan.<sup>8</sup>



## HELP PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS FROM RSV.

### DISCUSS RSV VACCINATION TODAY.

#### References:

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