

Rapid Detection of Respiratory Syncytial Virus



Does this test have other names?

RSV rapid detection, RSV indirect immunofluorescence assay, IFA

What is this test?

This test looks at cells taken from fluid in your nose or throat to see if you have respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV attacks the upper respiratory tract.

This test looks for antigens in these nose or throat cells to quickly diagnose an infection. An antigen is a substance in the virus that causes your body's immune system to make antibodies. The test is accurate 80% to 90% of the time.

If you have RSV, you can spread it to others through coughing and sneezing for about 10 days after your symptoms start. Once you have been infected, you are less likely to get it again. If you do, your symptoms are likely to be milder.

If your symptoms are severe, you may need treatment in the hospital. .

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you have symptoms of RSV and you are at risk for a serious infection such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia. This test is more commonly used in babies and young children. Symptoms of RSV infection may include:

- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever
- Wheezing
- Headache
- Severe tiredness (fatigue)

For most people, RSV symptoms go away on their own within a few days to a few weeks. But babies, young children, older adults, and people with a weak immune system are at risk for severe infections from this virus.

You may need this test to:

- Make an early and quick diagnosis to start early treatment
- Make an early and quick diagnosis to help prevent you from spreading the virus to others
- Diagnose RSV so that your healthcare provider can rule out other causes of respiratory disease

What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also use a cell culture to test your nasal or throat secretions. Blood tests to diagnose RSV are also available. But it can take a long time to get these test results.

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Normal results are negative, meaning you don't have RSV. If your test is positive, you may be infected with RSV.

How is this test done?

This test is done with a sample of secretions from the area at the back of your nose or throat, or both. Your healthcare provider may collect the sample by using a swab, a soft rubber bulb, or a plastic tube called a catheter. You may need to tip your head back for this.

Does this test pose any risks?

This test poses no known risks. You may feel some mild discomfort or a gagging sensation as the provider collects the sample.

What might affect my test results?

This test may be affected by how soon the test is done after your infection starts. It works best if the test is done in the first few days after symptoms begin. The results are more reliable in young children and less reliable in older children and adults.

How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to get ready for this test. Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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