



About Rhinoviruses

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KEY POINTS

- Most rhinovirus infections are mild, but they can cause serious illness in higher-risk populations.
- There is no vaccine, treatment, or medicine to prevent or cure illness caused by rhinoviruses.
- You can take steps to reduce your risk of getting infected with rhinoviruses and reduce the risk of their spread.



Overview

Rhinoviruses are the most frequent cause of the [common cold](#) and are a common viral trigger for asthma attacks. Most rhinovirus infections cause no symptoms or mild symptoms. They can also cause severe illness, especially if you have a [weakened immune system](#), asthma, or another underlying medical condition. There are different rhinovirus types. Rhinoviruses are part of the same virus group as [non-polio enteroviruses](#) and have some similar properties to [enterovirus D68](#). Rhinoviruses usually spread year-round, but activity tends to rise in early fall and spring.

There are **no immunizations to prevent rhinovirus** infection. However, there are vaccines for other respiratory viruses that can cause severe outcomes in some people. For adults and children 6 months and older, CDC recommends getting a current [COVID-19](#) and [flu](#) vaccine. CDC also recommends RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) immunizations to [protect infants](#). [Adults ages 60 years and older](#) should talk to their healthcare provider if an RSV vaccine is right for them.

Signs and symptoms

You may have no signs or symptoms when you are infected with a rhinovirus. If you do develop symptoms, they often last less than 7 days but can last up to 2 weeks. Your symptoms can be like those of other respiratory infections. They are more likely to turn serious for groups at increased risk for severe illness.

Common signs and symptoms include:

- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Mild body aches
- Fever

More severe illness is less common but can include:

- Asthma attack and reactive airway disease (wheezing, difficulty breathing)
- Middle ear infections (infection behind the ear drum)
- Sinus infections

- Bronchiolitis (infection of the small airways)
- Bronchitis (infection of the large airways)
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)

Learn about [managing your symptoms](#) and [when to seek medical care](#).

Prevention

You can take steps to reduce your risk of getting rhinoviruses and reduce the risk of spread if you get sick. Learn about:

- [Preventing respiratory viruses](#)
- [How respiratory viruses spread](#)

Testing

Healthcare providers typically do not test for rhinovirus infection. In people with severe illness, they may order testing for rhinovirus or can test as part of a panel that can detect both viruses and bacteria. Some people with cold symptoms may be tested for COVID-19 or flu. There are treatments for [COVID-19](#) or [flu](#) that can reduce the risk of severe disease.

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; Coronavirus and Other Respiratory Viruses Division