

Respiratory infections: pregnant women and parents of young children



How to protect yourself?

Pregnant people and parents of young children

Good practices to adopt:

- Pregnant women
- Newborns
- Vaccination
- Breastfeeding
- Masks
- Nasal wash
- Help and resources
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Is your child ill?

For advice, call 811, option 1.

Telephone service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Free and confidential.
Paediatric line for parents of children aged 0 to 17 years.

See also:

- Finding a health resource : [Québec.ca/HealthAccess](https://quebec.ca/HealthAccess)
- [When should you seek emergency care?](#) Information available in 16 languages, Montreal Children's Hospital

Infectious respiratory diseases

Whooping cough (pertussis), measles, COVID-19, influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), etc.

What are infectious respiratory diseases?

Infectious respiratory diseases are caused by a virus or bacteria generally found in the nose, throat or lungs.

COVID-19, influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), adenovirus and rhinovirus viruses are often the causes.

Measles and whooping cough are less common infectious respiratory diseases, but they can have serious consequences.

Infectious respiratory diseases is often spread by coughing or sneezing. You can catch an infectious respiratory disease through contact with someone who is sick or an object this person has touched (e.g., doorknob).

Pregnant women

Video: [Infections respiratoires : femmes enceintes](#)

If you are a pregnant woman, your defense system becomes weaker during your pregnancy. You are then more at risk of catching certain respiratory diseases.

La Dre Catherine Dea, Chief Youth Medical Officer at the [Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal](#), makes us aware of the right actions to adopt, such as vaccination and breastfeeding, to protect you and your baby.



The health of pregnant women is fragile.

To protect yourself, avoid contacts with people who are sick or have symptoms.

Wear a mask in public spaces and wash your hands often.

- Pregnant women's immune systems are weaker during pregnancy.
- Pregnant women are at greater risk of catching certain infectious respiratory diseases and developing complications.

For more information

- [Steps for limiting the spread of respiratory infectious diseases](#), Québec.ca.

Newborns

Video: [Respiratory infection: newborns](#)

Protect your child against respiratory infections

Newborns are fragile. Because their immune systems are developing, they are at particular risk of catching certain infectious respiratory diseases.

Dr. Jesse Papenburg, pediatric infectious disease specialist and medical microbiologist at [Montreal Children's Hospital](#), briefs us on good habits to adopt to protect newborns and prevent respiratory infections.

Newborns are fragile.

If you are the parent of a baby under 3 months old, avoid having visitors as much as possible, especially people who are sick or have symptoms.

If you have visitors in the presence of your baby, ask them to wash their hands and to wear a mask. It's a great way to protect your infant.

- Because their immune system is developing, newborns are at particular risk of catching certain infectious respiratory diseases.



Vaccination



Vaccination against the flu, COVID-19 and whooping cough: recommended for pregnant women

- The vaccines recommended during pregnancy are safe for both mothers and babies.
- Vaccination is the best way to protect pregnant women and their babies against certain infectious respiratory diseases.

For more information

- [Flu Vaccination Program](#), Québec.ca
- [COVID-19 vaccination](#), Québec.ca
- [Book your appointment](#), Clicsanté.ca
- [Vaccines](#), Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ)
- [I've heard that the flu vaccine is unnecessary, or that it can actually cause the flu. Is that true?](#), Montreal Children's Hospital

Breastfeeding

Women who plan to breastfeed or are currently breastfeeding: continue as long as possible.

- Breast milk contains antibodies that help protect the baby and promote healing in case of infection.
- Aside from rare exceptions, women who have infectious respiratory diseases can continue breastfeeding their babies if they adhere to health guidelines (e.g., wash hands, wear a mask, follow respiratory etiquette).
- Breastfed babies have a lower risk of getting infections such as otitis, colds, flu, bronchiolitis, pneumonia and gastroenteritis. A breastfed baby gets infected, the infection is usually less serious.
- Support is available. Contact your CLSC.



For more information

- [Making the decision to breastfeed](#), Institut national de santé publique du Québec
- [Breastfeeding basics](#), naître et grandir
- [Breastfeeding](#), Montreal Children's Hospital

Masks



It is recommended that pregnant women wear masks, especially in public spaces.

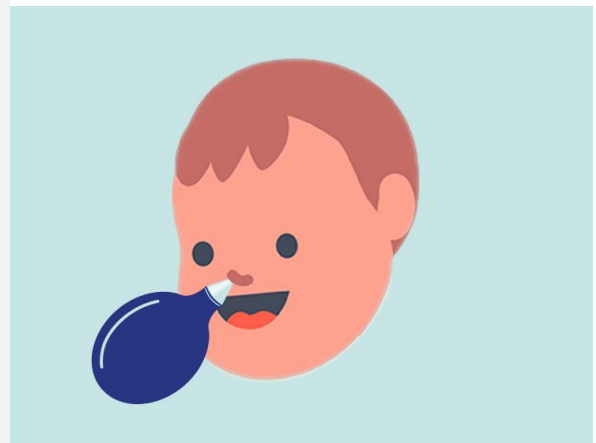
- Pregnant women should protect themselves first and foremost to reduce the risks of getting infectious respiratory diseases.

Nasal wash

Cleaning the noses of babies and young children helps them to sleep better, eat better and prevent certain respiratory infections and their complications.

Wash out your child's nose with a saline solution when they have a cold or a blocked nose. It will only take a few minutes but could prevent having to wait to see a health professional.

- The nose, throat, larynx and ear are all connected. Babies are at greater risk of infections.
- It is important to wash out the nose as soon as respiratory symptoms appear. This will unblock your child's nose and prevent complications.



How to prepare a saline solution for nasal hygiene?

Nose washing requires the use of a saline solution. The solution can be prepared at home but multiple preparation kits are available in pharmacies.

How to prepare a saline solution at home?

Ingredients

- 4 cups (1 liter) tap water
- 2 teaspoons (10 mL) salt
- Warning : table salt can be irritating for the nose, pickling salt (for marinade) is recommended
- ½ teaspoon (2.5 mL) sodium bicarbonate (baking soda)

Preparation steps

- Bring water to a full boil for 10 minutes and let cool.
- Add the salt.
- Add the sodium bicarbonate (baking soda).
- The solution can be kept up to 24 hours at room temperature or up to 7 days in the refrigerator in a clean airtight glass container.
- Every night, shake the solution container to dissolve the salt which will have settled at the bottom during refrigeration. Pour amount of solution necessary for 24 hours in a clean airtight glass container to insure that the solution will be at room temperature and ready for use the morning after.
- If you need to use the solution sooner, take the amount needed and warm it up by immersing the solution container in a bowl of hot water (or water bath). Always check the water temperature on your wrist before use. The water should be at body temperature, which is about 37 °C (98,6 °F).
- Prevent contamination by using different nasal irrigation containers for each family member.
- This solution can be used by the whole family. Thus, you can double or triple the recipe if needed.

Preparation made with a commercial packet

- Bring water to a full boil for 10 minutes and let cool.
- Pour 240 ml of water in the bottle supplied with Sinus Rinse™ or NetiRinse™ or any other clean container and add the packet (blue envelope for Sinus Rinse™ and white envelope for NetiRinse™). Shake the bottle or container to mix well. The solution is then ready to be used.
- The solution can be stored for 7 days, in a refrigerator, in a clean glass container with a tight fitting lid.

- It possible that at time of use, the preparation is too cold and causes discomfort to your child. You can warm up the solution by putting the bottle in a container of hot water. Always verify the temperature of the solution on your wrist before usage so that it is at body temperature or about 37° C (98,6° F).

If your child cannot tolerate nasal hygiene, or if the discomfort is too great, you can use small pods or sprays to moisten the nasal passages, allowing secretions to drain more easily.

Source : L'hygiène nasale, CHU Sainte-Justine (Only in French)

If you have any questions, you can contact your pharmacist.

For more information

- Fever in children, Québec.ca
- Fever, naître et grandir
- Fever (PDF), CHU Sainte-Justine
- Nasal Hygiène, CHU Sainte-Justine (only in French)
- Nasal Hygiène (PDF), CHU Sainte-Justine (only in French)
- Cough and cold medicines, Montreal Children's Hospital
- Common childhood infections, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ)

Help and resources

You can get more information about infectious respiratory diseases from a doctor or health professional:

- **Call Info-Santé: 811.**
Call Info-Santé 811, option 1 then option 2, to access the phone line reserved for the parents of children aged 0 to 17 years. A nurse will quickly help you.
See also the section: A call, a service.
- **Contact your local CLSC.**
- **Talk to your family doctor.**
- **Talk to your pharmacist.**
The pharmacist can give you advice, suggest products for many health problems, and also indicate who to consult, if needed.
- **Is your life, that of your child or that of a loved one in danger? Call 911**
- **You need to go to the emergency room:** See the list of emergency rooms on the island of Montréal.
See also: [When should you seek emergency care?](#) Information available in 16 languages, Montreal Children's Hospital

Find out more

- [Smart Choices: where to go for your child's health problem](#), Montreal Children's Hospital
- [How to get a consultation: primary care health and social services](#), Québec.ca

Printable Tools

- [Whooping cough \(pertussis\)](#)
- [Measles](#)

Français

- [Infections respiratoires, parents de jeunes enfants et femmes enceintes](#)