

For those of you who plan to visit us over the next few months please take a few minutes to read this letter.

Most people have never heard of **RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)**, even though nearly every child has had the virus by age two. For full-term babies, RSV typically is no worse than a common cold, but for preemies, the virus can be quite different. Babies born earlier than 36 weeks are at the highest risk for serious complications like pneumonia, bronchiolitis, and other sometimes fatal complications. **Our baby was born premature** and had a low birth weight: these are among the highest risk factors for contracting RSV and developing serious complications.

**Preventing the spread of RSV is very difficult.** Thus, we must be vigilant about keeping our child safe during **RSV season (October through April)**. The virus is **spread through physical contact**, in the air **via a cough or sneeze**, or **by touching** an infected object. The virus can live as long as six hours on hands and up to twelve hours on objects, and it **spreads very easily**, especially from child to child. Studies have also shown that infants pose an even higher risk of spreading RSV to others.

Since our baby was **preterm**, he/she did not acquire the necessary immunities to fight off infection.

For full-term babies, **RSV** typically is no worse than a common cold, but if our baby contracts **RSV**, he/she could be **hospitalised and develop serious complications**.

We are kindly asking our visitors to be part of our strategy to keep our baby RSV safe by following a few simple guidelines that would safeguard our baby from contracting RSV or any other illness.

We kindly ask that all visitors do the following:

- !! When you arrive, please **wash your hands** and use **hand-sanitizer** as needed **before** touching the baby.
- !! Please, if it is possible, get a **flu shot**.
- !! **Please refrain from coming over if you are currently sick** and have not been symptom-free for at least 5 days, or if you live with someone who is currently sick, or have been in close contact with someone who is sick.
- !! If you smoke, we ask that you **change your clothing and refrain from smoking prior to visiting**, as a preemie's lungs are very sensitive to smoke. Most RSV sites recommend against passive smoke exposure.
- !! If you are **parents to a baby or toddler**, please **refrain from bringing them** to our house during RSV season.

Unfortunately we will not be attending many events during RSV season. Our goal is to make it through this and the next RSV seasons without the baby contracting RSV or any other serious illness. **A preemie's lungs are still very fragile until they are 2-years-old.**

Please understand that this letter is not meant to offend anyone, just simply to provide an explanation. We hope you understand, and we appreciate your help keeping our babies safe.



Email: [info@inha.ie](mailto:info@inha.ie)  
Tel: 353 85 1920602

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