

# RSV burden in children under 5 increased in 2021 and 2022 versus 2015–2019

April 22 2024, by Elana Gotkine

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For children younger than 5 years, the incidence of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) hospitalization increased in 2021 and 2022 compared with

2015 to 2019, according to a [study published online](#) April 18 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Robert J. Suss, M.P.H., and Eric A.F. Simões, M.B.B.S., M.D., from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora, conducted a [retrospective cohort study](#) involving children younger than 5 years diagnosed with RSV and bronchiolitis at 50 U.S. children's hospitals.

Overall, 37.7 percent of the 924,061 study participants were diagnosed with RSV; 54.0 percent of these participants were hospitalized. The researchers found that for all ages, the incidence rate ratios of hospitalization increased in 2021 and 2022 versus 2015 to 2019.

The likelihood of being hospitalized in 2022 compared with 2015 to 2019 was 4.86 times higher for children aged 24 to 59 months and 1.77 times higher for infants aged 0 to 5 months. Regardless of year, Medicaid patients were more likely to be hospitalized than non-Medicaid patients.

"The current findings suggest that the relative risk of RSV-specific health care resource utilization across age groups increased in postpandemic seasons (2021 to 2022) relative to before the pandemic (2015 to 2019)," the authors write. "Furthermore, the risk of hospitalization, as well as [emergency department](#) and observation unit admissions, increased in magnitude with age, suggesting a disproportionately increased burden in [older children](#)."

**More information:** Robert J. Suss et al, Respiratory Syncytial Virus Hospital-Based Burden of Disease in Children Younger Than 5 Years, 2015-2022, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.7125](#)

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