Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

NOVA SCOTIA

Case Definition*

Confirmed Case:

Clinical evidence[1] with laboratory confirmation of RSV infection through RNA detection (e.g., via real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR]).

Clinical Evidence

RSV presents with varied clinical features and symptoms across individuals and age groups. Please refer to the RSV Chapter in the Nova Scotia Communicable Disease Manual or the Public Health Agency of Canada's Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV): Symptoms and treatment for RSV symptoms. Older adults often present atypically (e.g., acute exacerbation of asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, delirium, congestive heart failure exacerbations).

Reinfection

An RSV reinfection is a laboratory confirmed infection of RSV at least 90 days after the previous laboratory-confirmed infection. Infection dates are laboratory specimen collection dates (episode dates).

Hospitalized Case

A hospitalized RSV case is a person admitted to hospital who is a laboratory-confirmed case of RSV in the 14 days before admission or within 3 days after admission.[2]

Deceased Case

An RSV death is a laboratory-confirmed case of RSV where the positive test occurred before death. This includes deaths identified from death certificates that list RSV as an immediate cause of death, an antecedent cause giving rise to an immediate cause, or other significant condition contributing to, but not causally related to, the immediate cause.

Outbreak Definition

Two or more confirmed cases of RSV that are epidemiologically linked to a specific setting and/or location. For definition of outbreak in long-term care facility (LTCF), refer to the Guide to Respiratory Virus Infection and Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities.

Reporting Requirements

Report confirmed cases and outbreaks to DHW Surveillance via Panorama.

Report hospitalizations and ICU admission, until patients are discharged or deceased, for a maximum of four weeks. Update the outcome if status becomes more severe (i.e., order of severity: hospitalization, ICU admission, death) within four weeks to the DHW Surveillance Team via Panorama.

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* Most RSV cases are not investigated. For surveillance purposes, RSV cases are counted using positive laboratory results.

[1] See Clinical Evidence section.

[2] The hospitalization does not need to be directly attributable to RSV; a positive laboratory test is sufficient for reporting.

Additional Forms

None.

Data Entry

See Appendix I for required surveillance minimum dataset elements to be entered into Panorama.

Appendix I: DHW Required Minimum Data Set for RSV Surveillance

These data elements align with DHW's reporting of RSV (e.g., Respiratory Watch, PHAC submissions)

Panorama Variable	Description	DHW Surveillance Rationale
Client details		
First Name	First name of case.	
Last Name	Last name of case.	
Date of Birth	Date case was born.	Allows age-based analysis
Gender	Legal sex of case (this field is called gender in Panorama).	Allows sex-based analysis
HCN	Health card number of case.	Allows linkage with administrative health data
Address, including postal code	Address where case resides.	Allows for geographic analysis
Investigation details		
Disease	Disease under investigation.	
Microorganism	Name of microorganism causing the specific disease.	
Classification	Case classification	Used for counting cases in surveillance reporting
Disposition	Case disposition	Allows for exclusion of cases as applicable for surveillance reporting
Client address at time of investigation	Where client was residing at time of disease event, including postal code.	Allows for geographical analysis
Responsible organization	Local public health unit	Allows for geographical analysis when address information is unknown
Laboratory		
Laboratory ID/Accession Number	ID assigned by the PPHLN	Allows for data linkage
Test Name	Type of test carried out.	Used for analysis of laboratory data.
Specimen Type	Type of specimen collected: stool, blood, etc.	Allows for analysis by specimen type.
Specimen Site	Site of specimen collected.	Allows for analysis by specimen site.
Specimen Collection Date	The date when the specimen was collected.	Used to identify time of disease event, allows for accurate epidemiological analysis
Result Name	Test result description	Used for analysis of laboratory data.
Result Status	Status of test result (e.g., preliminary, final, etc.)	Used for analysis of laboratory data.
Interpreted Result	Laboratory interpretation of test performed.	Used for analysis of laboratory data.
Disease	Disease for which testing was conducted.	Used for analysis of laboratory data.

Panorama Variable	Description	DHW Surveillance Rationale
Signs and symptoms (include onset dates)		
None required for DHW surveillance		
Outcomes		
Alive-Hospitalized; Alive-Hospitalized- ICU; Deceased	Report hospitalizations and ICU admission, until patients are discharged or deceased, for a maximum of four weeks. Update the outcome if/when status becomes more severe (i.e., order of severity: hospitalization, ICU admissions, death). Deaths in the community are identified through death certificate.	Allows analysis of severity of illness.
Medications Summary		
None required for DHW surveillance		
Risk Factors (investigations)		
Among all hospitalized and ICU RSV cases who do not have RSV immunization information in Panorama		
Medical - Unimmunized for disease	Case was unimmunized.	Used to analyze RSV hospitalization by immunization status.
Medical-Unknown immunization history for disease	Unknown immunization status for disease	Used to analyze RSV hospitalization by immunization status.
Medical - Birthing parent received prenatal immunization for this disease	For hospitalized and/or ICU admitted infant, report whether birthing parent received prenatal RSV immunization during weeks 32 to 36 of pregnancy.	Used to analyze RSV hospitalization by immunization status.
Transmission Events		
None required for DHW surveillance		
Acquisition Events		
None required for DHW surveillance		
Immunization History (investigations)		
Among all hospitalized and ICU cases who do not have RSV immunization information in Panorama: if immunization information (including nirsevimab) not in Panorama, enter RSV immunization dose and date in immunization module. This includes hospitalized RSV cases who received RSV immunization out of province. For hospitalized children < 12 months, document history of nirsevimab to infant or pregnant parent. For hospitalized children 12 to 30 months, document history of RSV monoclonal antibodies.		Used to analyze RSV hospitalization by immunization status.

Panorama Variable	Description	DHW Surveillance Rationale
If immunization is self-reported, enter into Panorama only if there is supporting documentation.		

Appendix II: Updates to RSV Surveillance Guidelines

Date	Updates
August 2025	RSV surveillance guidelines released because RSV is notifiable in Nova Scotia as of September 2, 2025.
October 2025	Revised deceased case definition: removed time limit for positive lab test result before death.