



Rhinoviruses & The Common Cold

Environmental Hygiene Toolkit

Rhinovirus Symptoms

Common signs and symptoms of Rhinovirus include:

- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Headaches
- Watery Eyes
- Body Aches
- Fever

Rhinoviruses can be found in an infected person's:

- Eye, nose, and mouth secretions (saliva, mucus, sputum)
- Feces



What is it?

Each year in the US, there are millions of common cold cases. Common colds are the main reason why children miss school and adults miss work. Adults have an average of 2-3 colds per year and children have even more. There are approximately 200 viruses that can cause the common cold. Rhinoviruses are the most common cause.

Rhinoviruses are members of the Picornaviridae family of viruses, which includes poliovirus and enteroviruses, such as EV-D68. Rhinoviruses are often detected in the respiratory secretions (saliva, mucus, sputum) and feces of infected people. It is believed that the most likely route for the spread of Rhinoviruses is from person to person through the passing of contaminated secretions.

The infections are most likely to occur in the winter and spring; however, anyone can become infected at any time of the year. While it is common to recover from a Rhinovirus infection within 7-10 days, those with a weakened immune system, asthma or respiratory condition, Rhinoviruses can lead to a more serious illness, like Pneumonia. In people with asthma, particularly children, Rhinovirus infections are also frequently associated with flare-ups.

Fun Fact: The Rhinovirus receives its name because "rhino" means nose, the location where the virus typically infects.

"Even if the infected person does not have visible symptoms, they are able to spread the virus onto other people or into the environment."

How is it spread among people?

Rhinovirus is spread by direct contact with aerosols produced when someone coughs or sneezes. The virus is quite stable and can survive hours on inanimate objects, which can lead to infection if transferred to the nose, eyes or mouth.

It's easy for an infected person to unknowingly spread Rhinoviruses. Every time they cough or sneeze they are dispersing thousands of droplets into the air. Those droplets can settle on their clothing or hands and where they sit or touch. Studies suggest a person is most likely to transmit Rhinoviruses in the second to fourth day of infection, when the amount of virus in nasal secretions is highest.

Improper hand washing after using the toilet or changing the diapers of an infected infant can also contaminate other people or surfaces. An infected person may also touch their eyes, nose or mouth and transfer a Rhinovirus to their hands and then to other people or surfaces.

In each case, proper hand washing can stop the transmission of Rhinoviruses and prevent the second person from becoming infected.

Surfaces are also a source of indirect infection if they have been contaminated with Rhinoviruses and are not disinfected appropriately after contamination. Commonly touched surfaces, including door handles, restroom surfaces and baby changing stations, should be cleaned and disinfected regularly to prevent transmission of Rhinoviruses.

Recommendations

U S Chemical's best practice recommendations include the following:

- Minimize direct contact with persons known or suspected to have an Rhinovirus infection.
- Avoid touching the face, mouth, eyes and nose while around a person with symptoms of a Rhinovirus infection.
- Promote frequent hand washing throughout the day.
- When cleaning surfaces avoid spraying or splashing, which could further spread the virus.
- Stock additional supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectants, hand hygiene products, facial tissue, toilet tissue, trash bags, cleaning cloths and tools.
- Prepare communications for staff and visitors in the event they are needed.
- Evaluate whether enhanced cleaning procedures are required. U S Chemical cleaning procedures include detailing what surfaces and equipment are to be cleaned, the order to clean objects in a given room, when to perform hand hygiene, when glove use is required and when to change gloves, the cleaning tools and equipment to be used and the frequency of performing the cleaning/disinfection.
- Compliance monitoring of cleaning and disinfection procedures, hand hygiene guidelines and PPE usage are also recommended to ensure that established policies are being followed.

In addition to the recommendations listed above, U S Chemical recommends the following for education facilities:

- Be prepared. Know what to do in advance. Provide training for staff as needed.
- Have ongoing surveillance to quickly identify students that may be ill.
- Guard against overreacting to a sick student. Only doctors should diagnose Rhinovirus infections, but all visibly ill students should be sent home to reduce the risk to other students and faculty.
- Rhinovirus is spread by contaminated secretions. Frequent hand washing and coughing etiquette are important in protecting others.



Common Cold Prevention Tips



Clean Hands

Additional precautions include washing your hands frequently especially after sneezing or coughing. If hand wash stations are not available, use an alcohol hand sanitizer.



Wash

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Traditional hand washing is the most effective process for removing dirt and germs.



Sanitize

Sanitize with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to rapidly clean hands. Alcohol can kill the germs on hands, but does not remove soil. If your hands are soiled, you should wash your hands.



Coughing & Sneezing

Coughing and sneezing into a tissue and throwing it away or into your upper shirt sleeve, completely covering your mouth will help prevent the spread of contaminated secretions into the air.



Clean & Disinfect Surfaces

Commonly touched surfaces (door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, keyboards, phone, etc.) should be disinfected regularly using an EPA registered disinfectant.



Cleaning Best Practices

- Increase cleaning frequency during a Rhinovirus outbreak. This may mean changing the traditional cleaning schedule to an “every 4 hour” cleaning schedule of all common areas.
- Promote good hand washing.
- Be mindful to disinfect all commonly touched surfaces, particularly in public areas using a registered disinfectant effective against Rhinovirus.
- Maintain a constant flow such as working in a clockwise direction around the room.
- Make disinfecting wipes available in common areas for quick and easy disinfection of commonly touched surfaces.
- Clean from high to low.
- Clean from dirtiest to cleanest.
- Clean from dry to wet.

