

HOW TO GET RSV

- **Two children:**
 - 4 years old boy
 - three-week-old girl
- **Parents: fully aware and informed about the RSV virus**
 - Kept older child at home for safety reasons (COVID-19, 2021)
 - Sent back to kindergarten after lockdowns due to mental health considerations
- **A few days later, he became ill.**





DOING THINGS RIGHT... ...BUT CAN'T PROTECT THE BABY

- **Strict isolation**
 - Separate room for father and son
 - Separate dining
 - Only interacted with masks on, never with the baby present
 - Repeated hand washing, and the father interacted with the baby only while wearing a mask
 - Regular disinfection of frequently touched surfaces (as much as possible with a newborn and a working father during the postpartum period)
- **Despite all efforts, the baby still contracted RSV**

Prevention guidelines are (nearly) impossible to implement in multi-child families.

WHO'S FAULT?

- **Parents** are often **blamed** for failing to prevent transmission („victim-blaming“, stigmatizing, emotional/parental strain)
- Prevention responsibility is placed solely on families, unlike COVID-19.

BUT:

- Prevention measures are **not transferrable into real-world complexities** (spatial/logistical impossibility and developmental limitations)

A prevention strategy that places the entire burden on families is bound to fail. What is needed is a collective societal effort to protect children.

SYSTEMIC GAPS AND INTERGENERATIONAL INEQUALITY

- Recognize RSV as a serious **public health threat** and include it in **broader infection control strategies**.
- During COVID-19, the needs of children and adolescents were deprioritized in favor of protecting older adults, while for RSV, which primarily affects young children, society does not show the same willingness to implement protective measures.

**Shift from ‘family-centered’
responsibility to collective measures.**

RSV = COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

- Support from **daycare** and **schools**:
 - Small group childcare options if there is a high-risk child or newborn at home; alternative care options when the older sibling is sick; encourage sick children to stay home without penalty.
- **Community awareness**: Educational campaigns for all age groups, not just families.
- **Clear RSV monitoring** and **reporting**: targeted measures to prevent the spread, such as increased testing, closer communication with parents, and more transparent reporting on current infection waves.
- Strengthen **mental health support**: stopp victim-blaming and put more unrealistic expectations on families.
- ...and of course, it is still important to **follow hygiene rules**.