Let's Talk About...

Metapneumovirus (hMPV)

What is metapneumovirus?

Metapneumovirus (met-ah-new-mow vie-rus) is a virus that causes respiratory infections. It can cause a common cold, pneumonia, or bronchitis.

What does metapneumovirus look like?

Most children with this virus have a mild cold. For example, they might have a cough, runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, and fever.

Some children are sicker and can have some of these problems:

- Wheezing
- Trouble breathing
- A high fever
- A severe cough
- Very fast breathing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Metapneumovirus is more serious in children who are one year old or younger and in elderly people who cannot fight infections.

How do people get infected with metapneumovirus?

Children and adults can get infected with this virus by coming into close contact with another infected person. Sharing drinking glasses or sharing toys can also spread the disease.

How can I prevent my child from getting metapneumovirus?

Here are some ways you can protect your child from getting a metapneumovirus infection:

- Wash your and your child's hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Keep your child away from people who are sick.
- Keep your child away from large gatherings during the winter season.

How does the doctor know my child has metapneumovirus?

Your child's doctor will get a small amount of secretions (snot) from your child's nose. Then the doctor will send the sample to be tested for the virus.

What can I do to help my child?

It is important for your child to get enough liquids. Encourage your child to drink often. You can give your child medicine to treat a fever (Tylenol® or Ibuprofen®). Some children who are sicker may need to receive oxygen.

What happens if my child is admitted to the hospital?

If your child is admitted to the hospital, he may need an IV to help him get enough liquids. He may also need oxygen, usually with a nasal cannula (a small tube that sits under your child's nose that blows a little oxygen into each nostril). Your child may have to have secretions sucked out of his nose. This is done with a small tube (catheter) put into the nose every once in a while. This clears out secretions and can help your child breathe better.

Why is my child in droplet precautions?

Healthcare workers have close contact with your child and can be exposed to the virus. They will wear a mask when they come in your child's room. If they touch equipment in your child's room or touch and hold your child, they will wear gloves and a yellow gown. Most children only need droplet

precautions for a few days. Your child's doctor or nurse will let you know when the precautions can be stopped.

When can my child go home?

Your child can go home once he does the following:

- Drinks enough liquids
- Sleeps without oxygen
- Only needs a bulb suction for secretions; does not need suctioning with a catheter
- Meets any other requirement by your child's doctor

What if I have more questions?

If you have more questions about human metapneumovirus, contact your child's doctor.

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