

# Let's Talk About...

## Ribavirin

### What is Ribavirin?

Ribavirin is an antiviral, a medicine that kills viruses. Your child may be prescribed Ribavirin if they have:

- A severe respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- Influenza A and B
- Adenovirus
- Recently had a transplant
- A weak immune system

### How does a child receive Ribavirin?

Your child will sit in a negative pressure room, which vents all airflow outside. This cleans the air and sends the Ribavirin out of the room after your child receives the treatment.

A respiratory therapist will give your child the ribavirin treatment with a small particle aerosol generator (SPAG). The SPAG creates a fine mist that goes right into the lungs. Your child will wear a mask and breathe in the fine mist.

### What happens before a Ribavirin treatment?

Your child will receive an albuterol breathing treatment 15 minutes before receiving their Ribavirin treatment. Ribavirin can cause bronchospasms (such as an asthma attack), and the albuterol prevents bronchospasms.

### How often will my child receive Ribavirin treatments?

Ribavirin treatments are given three times a day. The treatment will last two hours, and then there is a six-hour break before the next treatment. Your child will receive two treatments at night and one treatment during the day. This is so your child can sleep at night and eat during the day.

### Does ribavirin have any side effects?

Side effects may include:

- Low blood pressure
- Headache
- Rash
- Skin irritation
- Anemia
- Eye infection
- Bronchospasm (such as an asthma attack)
- Nose and throat irritation



## Are there any special precautions when my child receives Ribavirin?

- People who have asthma should not be in the room while your child receives Ribavirin. The medicine may cause the person to have an asthma attack.
- Women who are breastfeeding, pregnant, or plan to become pregnant should not be in the room when your child receives Ribavirin.
- Your child and anyone else in your child's room should not wear contact lenses during a Ribavirin treatment.
- When your child is receiving Ribavirin treatment, everyone in the room should wear a gown, gloves, and mask.
- Your child's healthcare providers will use goggles while your child is receiving Ribavirin therapy.

## What if I have questions?

Call your child's healthcare provider if you have any questions about Ribavirin treatments.

## Notes

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