

Earvin “Magic” Johnson Joins Campaign About RSV in Older Adults

Adults 60 and older face an increased risk of RSV, yet many are unaware of how to protect themselves.

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Earvin “Magic” Johnson has partnered with global biopharma company GSK to launch a new health campaign that aims to educate older adults about the risks associated with [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV) and how to protect themselves against it.

With support from Johnson, 63, the [“Sideline RSV” campaign](#) hopes to spark conversations and promote education surrounding the risks of RSV among older adults. Since being diagnosed with HIV in 1991, Johnson has been a passionate public health advocate.

“My health is a top priority, yet like so many others, I was unaware that older adults are one of the highest-risk groups for severe RSV infection, no matter how healthy they feel,” Johnson said in a [GSK news release](#). “Throughout my life, I’ve learned the importance of staying up to date on potential health risks that come with aging. That’s why I’m teaming up with GSK to bring this critical RSV conversation to center court and inspire people to understand their risks to help ‘Sideline RSV.’”

RSV is a typically mild virus that is common and contagious. RSV can affect anyone, yet older adults face the highest risk for severe RSV infection, especially those with chronic heart and lung disease or those 60 and older. About 177,000 adults 65 are hospitalized each year due to RSV, and approximately 14,000 of those people die, according to a GSK news release.

Visitors to [SidelineRSV.com](#) can watch Johnson discuss the campaign in a video. “My mission in life is to empower older adults to be their own health advocates by putting their health first. Know your risks to help ‘Sideline RSV,’” Johnson says.

Due to immune systems that have weakened with age, older adults are more likely to experience severe outcomes from RSV. What’s more, underlying conditions such as chronic pulmonary disease, asthma or chronic heart failure may increase one’s risk of developing RSV.

“Cases of RSV in children are widely known; encouraging conversations around the risk of RSV among older adults will help increase the understanding and awareness for this group,” said

Leonard Friedland, MD, VP, director of scientific affairs and public health at GSK, in the news release. “There is no vaccine or specific treatment available for RSV in older adults. If you’re an older adult, including those with certain underlying medical conditions, it’s especially important to know your risk factors for RSV and speak with a health care provider if you develop cold-like symptoms.”

To learn more about RSV, click [#RSV](#) or read [Real Health’s Basics on Respiratory Syncytial Virus](#).

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