

RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

What is RSV?

RSV is a common virus that circulates in the fall and winter months and spreads very easily through **coughs, sneezes, or contact with surfaces contaminated with the virus.**



What are the risks of RSV?

RSV is especially dangerous for **babies under 6 months old**. RSV in young babies can cause bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in their lungs), and pneumonia.¹⁻⁴

40%



of babies admitted to the **hospital** for an RSV infection are between **0-2 months old**.^{2,5}

60%



of babies who get sick enough to need **intensive care** are between **0-5 months old**.^{2,5}

How can I PROTECT myself and my baby from RSV?

There are currently **two options** to protect you and/or your baby from RSV. The choice between these two options depends on your **personal preference, what is available in your province or territory, and cost.**

1

Maternal RSVpreF Vaccine (Abrysvo)

- ✓ Recommended between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- ✓ Protects **both** the pregnant parent and their baby from RSV.

The RSVpreF vaccine lowers a **baby's risk of hospitalization** from RSV by:

68%

in the **first 3 months** after birth.⁶⁻⁷

57%

in the **first 6 months** after birth.⁶⁻⁷

Available with a prescription, but not covered by Alberta Health. Cost is \$250-300.

2

Infant Antibody (Nirsevimab)

- ✓ Provides antibodies in a single shot given to babies shortly after birth.
- ✓ Protects babies with no protection for pregnant parents.

Nirsevimab lowers a baby's **risk of hospitalization** from RSV.

80-90%

in their **first RSV season**.⁸⁻⁹

Not available in Alberta currently

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

1. Abrams EM, Doyon-Plourde P, Davis P, Brousseau N, Irwin A, Siu W, Killikelly A. Burden of disease of respiratory syncytial virus in infants, young children and pregnant women and people. *Can Commun Dis Rep*. 2024;50(1-2):1–15. <https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v50i12a01>
2. Bourdeau M, Vadlamudi NK, Bastien N, Embree J, Halperin SA, Jadavji T, Kazmi K, Langley JM, Lebel MH, Le Saux N, et al. Pediatric RSV-associated hospitalizations before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023;6(10) <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.36863>
3. Mitchell I, Defoy I, Grubb E. Burden of respiratory syncytial virus hospitalizations in Canada. *Can Respir J*. 2017;2017:4521302. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/4521302>
4. National Advisory Committee on Immunization [NACI]. Statement on the prevention of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) disease in infants [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Government of Canada; 2024 May 17 [cited 2024 Jun 5]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-prevention-respiratory-syncytial-virus-disease-infants/naci-statement-2024-05-17.pdf>
5. Rha B, Curns AT, Lively JY, Campbell AP, Englund JA, Boom JA, Azimi PH, Weinberg GA, Staat MA, Selvarangan R, et al. Respiratory syncytial virus-associated hospitalizations among young children: 2015–2016. *Pediatrics*. 2020;146(1) <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-3611>
6. Kampmann B, Madhi SA, Munjal I, Simões EAF, Pahud BA, Llapur C, Baker J, Pérez Marc G, Radley D, Shittu E, et al. Bivalent prefusion F vaccine in pregnancy to prevent RSV illness in infants. *N Engl J Med*. 2023;388(16):1451–1464. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2216480>
7. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines and Immunizations: Healthcare Providers: RSV Vaccination for Pregnant People [Internet]. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2023 [cited 2024 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/pregnant-people.html>
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV): Immunizations to protect infants [Internet]. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2024 [cited 2024 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/immunizations-protect-infants/index.html>
9. Moline HL. Early Estimate of Nirsevimab Effectiveness for Prevention of Respiratory Syncytial Virus–Associated Hospitalization Among Infants Entering Their First Respiratory Syncytial Virus Season—New Vaccine Surveillance Network, October 2023–February 2024. *MMWR. Morbidity and mortality weekly report*. 2024;73.
10. Public Health Agency of Canada. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Government of Canada; 2022 [cited 2024 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/respiratory-syncytial-virus.html>

