

RSV immunisation for babies and children

Information for parents and carers

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of respiratory illness. This fact sheet is about RSV Vaccination during pregnancy - Abrysvo® and RSV Immunisation for babies and children - Nirsevimab.

Key facts

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of respiratory illness. It can make babies and young children very sick.

Two products help protect babies from severe RSV:

- Abrysvo® - a vaccine for pregnant women
- Nirsevimab (also called Beyfortus™) - an immunisation for babies and children.

Talk to your doctor about which one is right for you and your baby.

1. RSV vaccination during pregnancy - Abrysvo®
 - a. What is the maternal RSV vaccine Abrysvo®?
 - b. When should you get the vaccine?
 - c. What are the side effects of the maternal RSV vaccine?
2. RSV immunisation for babies and children - Nirsevimab
 - a. What is nirsevimab (also known as Beyfortus™)?
 - b. Should my baby have nirsevimab?
 - c. What are the side effects?
3. Where can I get RSV immunisation in NSW?
 - e. Can these RSV immunisation products be given with other immunisations?
 - f. Are these RSV immunisation products safe?
 - g. Where will my child's immunisation be recorded?
 - h. More information

RSV vaccination during pregnancy

- Abrysvo®

What is the maternal RSV vaccine Abrysvo®?

Abrysvo® is a maternal RSV vaccine given to pregnant women during each pregnancy.

- It helps your body make antibodies. These are proteins that fight infection.
- It takes about two weeks for your body to start making the antibodies after you get the vaccine. The antibodies then pass to your baby through the placenta.
- This protects your baby from RSV from birth to at least 6 months old.

Studies show the vaccine is very effective. Babies whose mothers had Abrysvo® were 70% less likely to go to hospital with RSV in their first 6 months.

When should you get the vaccine?

The best time is from 28 weeks of pregnancy, ideally before 36 weeks.

This gives your body enough time to make antibodies to protect your baby. You can still have the vaccine after 36 weeks if you missed it earlier.

Your baby may not be fully protected if you have the vaccine less than 2 weeks before birth. Your baby will be offered an RSV immunisation, called nirsevimab, at birth to make sure they have enough protection.

You only need one dose of Abrysvo® each pregnancy. Partners and other family members do not need this vaccine.

The vaccine is free under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) to arrange your maternal RSV vaccine.

What are the side effects of the maternal RSV vaccine?

Most side effects are mild. They can include:

- pain where the needle went in
- headache
- muscle pain
- feeling sick (nausea).

If you experience other side effects, speak to your midwife or doctor.

If you are concerned about side effects, contact:

- your nurse, doctor or paediatrician
- healthdirect (1800 022 222)

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) or go to your nearest emergency department.

RSV immunisation for babies and children - Nirsevimab

What is nirsevimab (also known as Beyfortus™)?

Nirsevimab is an immunisation that protects babies and infants from RSV.

Newborn babies have immune systems that have not matured yet. They cannot make enough antibodies to fight infection on their own. Nirsevimab gives your baby ready-made antibodies straight away. These antibodies protect them from RSV for their first 5 to 6 months of life.

Studies show nirsevimab lowers the chance of a baby going to hospital with RSV by more than 80%.

Should my baby have nirsevimab?

In NSW, nirsevimab is free for eligible babies up to 6 months old.

Your baby is eligible if:

- they have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk of severe RSV
- their mother did not have the RSV vaccine Abrysvo® during pregnancy
- their mother had Abrysvo® less than 2 weeks before giving birth
- their mother has a very weak immune system (even if she had the RSV vaccine Abrysvo®).

Some children aged up to 24 months may need another dose of nirsevimab before their next RSV season if they have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk.

Talk to your doctor about if nirsevimab is recommended for your child.

What are the side effects?

Most babies and children have no side effects. Mild side effects can include:

- pain or redness where the needle went in
- swelling and hardness on the skin where the needle went in
- rash
- fever.

If you are worried about side effects, speak to:

- your nurse, doctor or paediatrician
- healthdirect by calling 1800 022 222.

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) or go to your nearest emergency department.

Where can I get RSV immunisation in NSW?

For your baby (nirsevimab)

If your baby is eligible, they will usually get nirsevimab in the hospital where they are born.

If your baby is up to 6 months old and missed it in hospital, they can still get it. Go to a local doctor, AMS, or some community health centres.

Babies aged 7 to 24 months who are eligible can also get nirsevimab. You can get it from a local doctor, AMS, or some community health centres.

For pregnant women (Abrysvo®)

You can get Abrysvo® from your local doctor, pharmacy or AMS.

Both products are given as an injection.

Can these RSV immunisation products be given with other immunisations?

Yes. Nirsevimab can be safely given with other childhood vaccines.

Babies can have nirsevimab at birth. They can get it at the same time as their [hepatitis B vaccine](#) and [vitamin K injection](#). These are routine injections given at birth.

Abrysvo® can be given at the same time as other pregnancy vaccines, like whooping cough and influenza (flu).

Are these RSV immunisation products safe?

Yes. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has reviewed the evidence and determined that nirsevimab and Abrysvo® are safe and effective for you and your baby. Neither nirsevimab nor Abrysvo® can cause RSV illness.

Both products have been widely used overseas. Real world safety data shows they work well and are safe.

Where will my child's immunisation be recorded?

Your child's nirsevimab immunisation, or the mother's Abrysvo® vaccination, will be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

You can see their immunisation record by logging into your Medicare account in [MyGov](#).

More information

- [NSW Health - RSV fact sheet](#)
- [Consumer Medicine Information leaflet for Beyfortus™ \(nirsevimab\)](#)
- [Consumer Medicine Information – Abrysvo®](#)
- [Sydney Children's Hospitals Network's Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) monoclonal antibody fact sheet](#)
- [Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation \(SKAI\) - RSV](#)
- [NCIRS - RSV Frequently asked questions](#)
- [MotherSafe](#)

Visit <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/rsv>

