

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infection and vaccination

How does RSV affect me?

- RSV is a common virus that, in most cases, causes mild cold-like symptoms.
- Older people are at higher risk of severe disease and more likely to get pneumonia (a chest infection) and need to go to hospital if they get RSV.
- RSV can worsen other conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart failure.

How does the RSV vaccine help?

- The vaccine may not stop you from getting RSV BUT it will protect you from becoming very unwell.
- Getting the vaccine makes it less likely that you will get a chest infection or need to go to hospital.

When can I get the free RSV vaccine?

- Anyone aged 75 years and older and Aboriginal people aged 60 years and older, can receive the RSV vaccine called Arexvy.

What are common side effects of the RSV vaccine?

- Most side effects are mild to moderate and last only a few days. These side effects include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, feeling tired, headache and muscle pains.
- Paracetamol can help with this pain.
- A very small number of adults aged 60 years and over could develop rare complications. More information is on the [Australian Immunisation Handbook – RSV Chapter](#)

Can the RSV vaccine give me RSV?

- No. The vaccine cannot give you RSV because there is no live virus in the vaccine.

Can I have the vaccine if I have had a recent RSV infection?

- Yes. If you have recovered from an RSV infection, you can have the RSV vaccine.
- Protection from RSV infection is not long-lasting and getting infected with RSV is common. Getting the RSV vaccine will provide more protection.

Can I have the RSV vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

- Yes. You can have the RSV vaccine at the same time as other vaccines such as the COVID-19 vaccine, flu vaccine, shingles vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine.

Where can I get more information?

- Speak to your GP.
- Frequently asked questions on RSV infection and vaccine are also available (in English only) – please scan the QR code:

