

RSV Information Sheet for Parents

What is RSV?

RSV (Respiratory syncytial virus) is a common virus that infects the lungs and airways. Most children will get RSV before they turn two.¹ In healthy adults and older children, RSV symptoms are usually mild and cold-like. But for babies, RSV infections can be more serious.

When is my child at highest risk for RSV?

RSV season in Canada is usually from late fall to early spring.² **During RSV season, many people get the virus, and it spreads easily from person to person.**

What risk does RSV pose to my child?

A baby's immune system is still developing, so they are more likely to get very sick from RSV. **RSV is the leading cause of infant hospitalization in Canada³** Getting RSV as a baby can lead to long-term problems and a higher risk of other illnesses during childhood, like asthma.⁴

How can I protect my child from RSV?

In Canada, families have two options to help protect babies during their first RSV season:



**RSV immunization
for babies**



**RSV vaccine
for pregnant mothers**

Both options lower the risk of severe illness from RSV. The decision depends on factors, such as availability, timing (during pregnancy or after birth), and each family's circumstances. Families can make informed decisions by discussing options with a healthcare provider.

Are these RSV protection options safe?

The RSV protection options approved in Canada have been carefully reviewed by Health Canada for quality, safety, and effectiveness. Like all medicines and vaccines, they can cause side effects, and responses may vary from person to person. Your healthcare provider can help you understand the potential benefits and risks and whether RSV protection is right for you or your baby.^{7,8}



RSV Information Hub

Learn more about RSV and protection options in Canada.

praxushealth.ca/rsv-parents



References:

1. Mayo Clinic - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

2. Public Health Agency of Canada - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV): For health professionals

3. Burden of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Hospitalizations in Canada

4. Cleveland Clinic - RSV in Babies & Children

5. CDC - RSV Vaccine Guidance for Pregnant Women

6. CDC - RSV Immunization Guidance for Infants and Young Children

7. Comprehensive Summary of Safety Data on Nirsevimab in Infants and Children from All Pivotal Randomized Clinical Trials

8. NHS - RSV vaccine

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Possible side effects of RSV protection options

Like all medicines and vaccines, RSV protection options can cause side effects. Not everyone will experience side effects, and when they do happen, they are usually mild and go away on their own within a few days. Serious side effects are rare but can occur. This information helps you understand what to expect and when to seek medical care. It does not replace advice from your healthcare provider.

RSV immunization for babies

Most babies do well after receiving RSV immunization. **Some may experience common, usually mild side effects:**

- Redness, swelling, or soreness where the injection was given
- Mild fever
- Rash
- Fussiness or temporary changes in behaviour

These side effects are usually short-lived and improve on their own.

Rare but serious reactions: Very rarely, babies can have a severe allergic reaction. Seek emergency medical care (call 9-1-1) if your baby has:

- Trouble breathing or wheezing
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Widespread rash or hives with other symptoms
- Extreme sleepiness, collapse, or difficulty waking

RSV immunization should not be given to babies who have had a severe allergic reaction to nirsevimab or any of its ingredients in the past. Your baby's healthcare provider will review this before immunization.

RSV vaccine for pregnant mothers

After receiving the RSV vaccine during pregnancy, **some people may experience common, usually mild side effects:**

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the injection was given
- Feeling tired
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Mild nausea

These symptoms usually go away within a few days.

Less common side effects: Redness or swollen glands near the injection site

Rare but serious reactions: As with other vaccines, rare severe allergic reactions can occur. Seek emergency medical care if you experience:

- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Severe rash or hives
- Dizziness, fainting, or collapse

Pregnancy-specific safety information: In large studies, some pregnancy-related events such as preterm birth, high blood pressure during pregnancy, and pre-eclampsia occurred in both vaccinated and unvaccinated groups. However, current evidence does not clearly show that the vaccine caused these events.

As a precaution, Health Canada recommends this vaccine only between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. Your pregnancy care provider will help you understand the potential benefits and risks for your situation.

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Contact your healthcare provider if side effects worry you, a fever is high or lasts more than a couple of days, you are unsure what is normal after immunization

References:

1. Mayo Clinic - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
2. Public Health Agency of Canada - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV): For health professionals
3. Burden of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Hospitalizations in Canada
4. Cleveland Clinic - RSV in Babies & Children
5. CDC - RSV Vaccine Guidance for Pregnant Women
6. CDC - RSV Immunization Guidance for Infants and Young Children
7. Comprehensive Summary of Safety Data on Nirsevimab in Infants and Children from All Pivotal Randomized Clinical Trials
8. NHS - RSV vaccine