

RSV - What You Need to Know

What is RSV?

RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is a common virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. RSV can be **dangerous and even deadly for babies, toddlers, and older adults.**

Every year in the US:

- Around 70,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized with RSV.
- Up to 160,000 adults 65 and older are hospitalized with RSV.
- Between 100 and 300 children die from RSV.
- Between 6,000 and 10,000 older adults die from RSV.

We have new treatments and vaccines to prevent these hospitalizations and deaths!

How can we protect babies and toddlers?

There are two options to keep infants younger than 8 months old protected from RSV:

Beyfortus (nirsevimab)

- A monoclonal antibody treatment for RSV; an infusion of antibodies that provide temporary protection against RSV
- **Given in one dose to infants under 8 months** old during their first RSV season
- Provides protection as soon as it is given to the baby
- Protection lasts about 6 months
- Given before or during the RSV season (fall through spring)

Abrysvo

- RSV vaccine
- **Given to pregnant people** between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy
- Provides immediate protection to newborns if it is given at least 14 days prior to birth.
- Protection lasts about 6 months
- Given September through January

What are Monoclonal Antibodies?

- Monoclonal antibodies are special proteins created in a lab to help your immune system fight off diseases. They are different from vaccines.
- Vaccines teach your immune system to make its own antibodies when it encounters a virus, providing lasting protection over time. Monoclonal antibody treatments give you these antibodies directly.
- Beyfortus (nirsevimab) is a monoclonal antibody treatment; it is also called the “RSV preventative antibody.”

What are the options for high-risk toddlers?

Children ages 8 to 19 months at high risk can get Beyfortus (nirsevimab) for a second RSV season. High-risk includes children born prematurely and those with certain health conditions. Children living in crowded households and in homes with poor air quality or lack of running water are also at increased risk.

Synagis (palivixumab) is another monoclonal antibody treatment that has been in use since 1998. It is approved only for children under 24 months who have health conditions that put them at higher risk for RSV and should be given once per month during the RSV season.

What about adults 60 and older?

There are two vaccines for adults 60 or older: Arexvy and Abrysvo. Both vaccines are more than 80% effective at preventing RSV-related lung infections in the first RSV season after vaccination.

Immune systems weaken with age, meaning older adults are at increased risk from RSV. Certain medical conditions may also increase your risk of getting very sick from RSV. Not all adults over 60 should get the RSV vaccine. People in this age group should talk to their health care provider to see if RSV vaccination is right for them.

These new treatments and vaccines are essential to protecting those most at risk for severe RSV. We have more tools than ever to keep our communities safe!

Don't Forget About COVID and Flu Vaccines too!

#KeepCOHealthy

Sources

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