

PROTECTION AGAINST RSV FOR INFANTS

What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common contagious virus that causes upper and lower respiratory tract infections. Older adults, infants, and young children with some medical conditions can become seriously sick from RSV. RSV can occur all year-round in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL); however, most admissions to hospitals associated with RSV happen between November and May every year.

How is RSV spread?

RSV spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This releases tiny droplets that contain the virus. These droplets can infect another person if they get into the eyes, nose, or mouth, or are breathed into the lungs. RSV can also spread when someone touches surfaces, objects, or hands that have the virus on them and then touches their face.

Why should infants and young children receive protection against RSV?

The younger the infant, the more at risk they are of serious illness from RSV. Most admissions to hospitals or the intensive care unit due to RSV infection involve infants 6 months of age and younger. Children 2 years of age and younger with certain medical conditions are also at higher risk of severe RSV infections.

What is Nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab is a monoclonal antibody that protects infants and young children against RSV. Giving Nirsevimab to newborns protects them from RSV when they are most vulnerable. Nirsevimab has been shown to reduce the risk of hospitalization due to RSV.

Who is eligible for RSV immunization through the publicly funded system?

All infants born on or after May 1, 2026 are eligible for RSV immunization. Children up to 2 years old with the following medical conditions who are entering their second RSV season are also eligible for Nirsevimab:

- Chronic lung disease, including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, requiring ongoing assisted ventilation, oxygen therapy or chronic medical therapy in the 6 months prior to the start of the RSV season
- Cystic fibrosis with respiratory involvement and/or growth delay
- Hemodynamically significant chronic cardiac disease
- Severe immunodeficiency
- Severe congenital airway anomalies impairing clearing of respiratory secretions
- Neuromuscular disease impairing clearing of respiratory secretions

How many doses of Nirsevimab will my baby receive?

For most infants, one dose of Nirsevimab will be administered. Depending on their weight, some infants may receive 2 injections at the time of administration.

Where can my baby get Nirsevimab?

Babies will be offered Nirsevimab before they are discharged from hospital after they are born. Babies born from May 1, 2026 to June 15, 2026 in acute care facilities will be offered Nirsevimab through public health. RSV immunization can be given at the same time as other routine immunizations given during public health child health visits. Children 2 years of age or younger who have certain medical conditions and are entering their second RSV season can receive Nirsevimab through public health, based on a referral confirming eligibility from the Janeway RSV Program.

Are RSV monoclonal antibodies safe?

Yes, monoclonal antibodies are safe and effective. The most common side effects are redness or swelling at the injection site, fever, and rash.

Should a child get RSV immunization if they have had RSV?

A previous RSV infection does not mean an infant or child cannot get Nirsevimab. However, the benefit from providing Nirsevimab to a child who has a **confirmed** current or previous RSV infection is low. The risk of repeated hospitalization due to RSV infection during the same RSV season is very low.

Infants who are severely immunocompromised and have an RSV infection may not have a strong enough immune response to the infection. Administering Nirsevimab to babies and children who are immunocompromised may provide added protection.

Who should not get Nirsevimab?

- Individuals with known hypersensitivity to Nirsevimab or any of its components
- Individuals with known hypersensitivity to other monoclonal antibodies.
- Individuals who have a previous allergic reaction to Nirsevimab
- People over 2 years of age