

# Let's Talk About the New RSV Protection for Children

## What is RSV?

RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is a common virus that causes illness. Almost all children will be infected with RSV by 2 years old. RSV is not a new virus and it is very easily spread.

## What are the symptoms of RSV?

RSV usually causes a runny nose, fever, sneezing and cough. In babies, symptoms could include fussiness, breathing problems and less energy.

## What is Nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab (Beyfortus™) is an immunization that helps prevent serious illness from RSV. Like other medications, the dose is determined by a child's weight. Protection is given right away following the shot!

## What age does my child need to be to get Nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab is recommended for:

- Newborns who are born during the RSV season.
- Babies who are less than 8 months old who are entering their first RSV season.
- Children 8-19 months old, who are at risk of severe RSV disease.

## When does RSV usually spread?

RSV can spread any time, but it is most common during colder months (November to March). This is known as the "respiratory virus season" in Illinois. Respiratory viruses can and do spread all year!

## Why do we need treatment for RSV?

RSV is the number one reason babies younger than 1 year old need to be hospitalized. RSV can cause lung infections, such as childhood pneumonia, and death. **This treatment will help keep children out of the hospital!**

## Is Nirsevimab a vaccine?

No, but it is an immunization. It is an antibody that gives a child immunity (immunity = protection) for around 6 months. This protection is called passive immunity. It is given **one time** per RSV season through an intramuscular injection, which is the same way vaccines are given.

## What are the side effects of Nirsevimab?

Common side effects may include rash and irritation at the injection site (where the shot was given).

## How much does Nirsevimab cost?

If your child is enrolled or eligible for Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, it will be free. Most private insurers will also cover Nirsevimab, however you should call first if you want to know what the cost may be.

## What is Abrysvo?

Abrysvo is an RSV vaccine that can be given to pregnant mothers that will pass on RSV immunity to their infant. Abrysvo can be given to a pregnant person between 32-36 weeks' gestation during September - January and can protect the infant for up to 6 months.

## What is Palivizumab?

Palivizumab (brand name Synagis) is also an antibody shot used to prevent severe illness in babies born prematurely (at or before 35 weeks) AND who are less than 6 months old OR children who have a chronic lung condition (BPD) that needed treatment in the last 6 months or were born with certain types of heart disease AND who are less than 24 months old.

## Which RSV protection should I get for my child?

Talk to your child's doctor about what is best for them. If an infant gets protection from Abrysvo, they will likely not need to get Nirsevimab after they are born.

## What else can I do to protect my child from RSV?



Wash your hands and teach your children to frequently wash their hands with soap & water for 20 seconds.



Avoid letting your child touch their face after sharing toys or touching something that may have germs on it (door knobs, etc.) Don't let your child touch someone else's fork or spoon.



Get yourself and your family their flu and COVID-19 vaccines.



When gathering inside get some ventilation and air circulation going - open a window, turn on a fan.

## How can I help my child if they get sick?

Let them rest and share extra cuddles if they want them and make sure they stay hydrated.



Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen if needed (be sure to follow directions, you can use this over the counter medication guide). Antibiotics will *not* help your child feel better if they have a virus. Antiviral drugs can help and should be started early if your child has the flu.



Remove mucus with a bulb syringe or snot remover if needed. Using a drop or two of saline can help too. Put a cool-mist humidifier in their room.



**Call your child's doctor if you are concerned or have questions. Know when to get help. If your child has a severe respiratory virus, they may need oxygen, medication to open their airways, or IV fluids.**