# Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): Protection for Newborns

## What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial [sin-SIS-shul] virus, or RSV, is a common virus that affects the lungs. It causes cold-like symptoms such as coughing, runny nose, fever, and wheezing.

These symptoms are usually mild, and people get better in a week or two, but some babies develop severe infections and need hospitalization. Babies younger than 6 months old are at highest risk for going to the hospital.

## Can RSV be prevented?

Yes! Newborns can be protected from RSV infection in 2 ways: a vaccine (Abrysvo®) given to the mother during pregnancy or an RSV antibody immunization for newborns.

In most cases, only the mother or the baby need immunization in order to provide enough protection for an infant. Review the comparison chart below below and talk with your doctor about your options.

| | RSV vaccine | RSV monoclonal antibody |
|---|---|---|
| **What is another name for this?** | Abrysvo® | nirsevimab (Beyfortus®), or clesrovimab (Enflonsia®) |
| **Who gets it?** | Mothers, during pregnancy, between 32 to 36 weeks gestation | Babies younger than 8 months old |
| **What time of year is it given?** | Between September and January | Once at the beginning of, or during, RSV season (October through March)<br>Only needed if the mother did not get the vaccine at least 14 days before delivery |
| **How is it given?** | Injection (shot) into a large muscle, like the upper arm | Injection (shot) into a large muscle, like the upper leg or buttocks |
| **What are the side effects?** | Pain where the shot was given<br>Headache<br>Nausea<br>May increase the risk of pre-term birth | Pain where the shot was given |

## Are there any safety concerns?

### Nirsevimab or clesrovimab

Serious allergic reactions are possible with any immunization. No serious reactions were reported during clinical trials.

### Abrysvo

Serious allergic reactions are possible with any vaccine. Tell your doctor if you are allergic to polysorbate 80.

There may be an increased risk of preterm birth, though the risk is low.

During studies in older persons, a few people developed neurologic conditions, but this did not happen in pregnant people who got the RSV vaccine.

## Are they covered by insurance?

Call your insurance company and ask if they will cover these immunizations.

## What else can I do to prevent RSV?

Things you can do every day include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water. Scrub for at least 20 seconds. Encourage others in your household to do the same.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you are sick. Others in your household should do the same.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve — not your hands.
- Avoid close contact with others. Don't share cups or eating utensils.
- Frequently clean things that are touched often, such as your phone or other electronic devices, doorknobs, and hand rails.

Notes

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