

How to protect you and your family against RSV

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is a common virus that affects the lungs and breathing. It spreads easily in the fall and winter months. Symptoms can appear like the common cold and last 1-2 weeks.

Anyone can get RSV. But it can be more serious for adults 60 and older, those with chronic conditions, and babies.

How can I prevent RSV.

There are two new approved vaccines. They help protect people older than 60 and those who are pregnant.

Monoclonal antibodies are proteins that help the body's immune system. They are designed to attach to the virus and to help the body get rid of it. These are available for children up to 2 years old.

Who is eligible to get an RSV vaccine?

People age 60 and older can get an RSV vaccine called Arexvy™ or Abrysvo™. But they should talk with their doctor first. People under 60, including those with cancer, should not get this shot.¹ Abrysvo™ is an RSV vaccine that can also help protect pregnant women and infants. It can be given between week 32 and week 36 of pregnancy.²

The CDC now recommends two monoclonal antibody products for infants. One is called Beyfortus® (nirsevimab). It helps protect infants under 8 months and some older babies who are at higher risk.

The second monoclonal antibody product is called Synagis® (palivizumab). It is for children under 24 months who are at high risk of severe disease.

If you're expecting or have babies under 2, you should talk with your doctor to learn more.

What are common side effects?

Most common side effects are mild and go away after a few days.³ Side effects may include:

- Pain where the shot was given
- Fatigue (feeling more weak or tired than usual)
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle pain

Do I need an RSV vaccine every year?

For now, you will only need 1 dose. Seasonal doses may be needed in the future.

What is the cost of an RSV vaccine?

Check with your employer's health plan to find out if it is covered. Medicare part D covers the shots for appropriate plan members.

Sources:

1. RSV Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/prevention.html>. Accessed on September 13, 2023

2. Abrysvo approved for pregnant women 32-26 weeks gestational age, <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-vaccine-pregnant-individuals-prevent-rsv-infants>. Accessed on September 20, 2023

3. Frequently Asked Questions About RSV Vaccine for Adults, <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/older-adults-faqs.html>. Accessed on September 13, 2023.

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