



Nirsevimab – What Aboriginal parents need to know

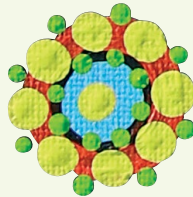
Consumer information sheet

What is RSV?

RSV is a highly contagious virus that can infect people of all ages. It can cause a range of respiratory illnesses from mild colds to severe conditions like bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways of the lungs), or pneumonia (lung infection). It mostly affects babies and young children but can also occur in older adults.

Symptoms of RSV can include:

- runny nose
- decrease in appetite
- coughing
- sneezing
- fever
- wheezing and difficulty breathing (including worsening of asthma).



How do you get RSV?

RSV is spread through droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze, and therefore can spread easily between family members and in the community.

What is nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab (Beyfortus®) is a medicine containing antibodies that can prevent severe RSV disease in infants and young children. Antibodies are proteins used by the body to fight off harmful germs. The antibodies provide direct protection against RSV almost immediately and studies have shown it to be 80 per cent effective at decreasing infant hospitalisations due to RSV. Nirsevimab medicine contains pre-made RSV preventive antibodies that can provide direct protection to the infant almost immediately after they are administered.

Who is eligible for nirsevimab?

Children residing in, or who are imminently to reside in, the Kimberley or Pilbara from 1 October 2024 through 1 April 2025 AND who meet one or more of the following criteria are eligible for nirsevimab:

- All newborns
- Any infant less than 8 months of age who has not previously received nirsevimab
- Children aged less than 19 months with certain medical risk conditions who have not previously received nirsevimab
- All Aboriginal children aged less than 19 months who have not previously received nirsevimab.

Why should my baby be immunised?

In 2023 more than 150 Aboriginal infants under the age of one were hospitalised with RSV in Western Australia (WA).

Aboriginal babies and young children aged 2 years and under are hospitalised at a rate at least two times higher than non-Aboriginal babies and young children.

How is the injection given?

It is given as a single injection in the muscle, usually in the outer part of the thigh, similar to other injections your baby has received.

Could the injection cause RSV illness?

No, it is an immunisation medicine given by injection. It does not contain RSV and it cannot cause RSV illness.

Can the RSV injection be given at the same time as other routine vaccines?

Yes. It can be safely given at the same time as other routine childhood vaccines. You do not need to delay immunisation until your baby is older as it strengthens your baby's immunity.

Are there any side effects?

In clinical trials, most infants who received nirsevimab had no side effects. Although uncommon, side effects can include rash, injection site reactions (redness, swelling, and pain where the injection is given) and fever. Almost all reactions are minor and usually go away within a few days. Parents should also be mindful that an allergic reaction could start after your child has left the hospital or clinic. Serious side effects from immunisation are very rare but can occur. You can call your local health service or Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 (24 hours) for non-urgent advice on managing side effects if needed.

What should I do if I suspect my baby has had a serious reaction?

Signs of a severe allergic reaction usually happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination and can include:

- hives
- swelling of the face and throat
- difficulty breathing
- a fast heartbeat
- dizziness and weakness.

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If your baby has a reaction that you think is serious or unexpected, see your immunisation provider if you are in the clinic. **If you are not in the clinic and you believe your reaction is severe or life-threatening you should call triple zero (000) for an ambulance or go to your closest emergency department.**

The Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance (WAVSS) system is the central reporting service in WA for any significant adverse events following immunisation. If you suspect any serious side effects happened after immunisation, please report:

- at www.safevac.org.au/Home/Info/WA or
- by calling WAVSS on (08) 6456 0208 (8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday).

By reporting suspected serious side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this product.

How can I learn more?

- ask your health care provider or
- visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/rsv

