

Infant and High-risk Children Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Prevention Program - Vaccine for Pregnant Individuals

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It is not intended to provide or replace medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You should talk to a health care professional about health concerns and illness.

What is RSV?

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a virus that can cause serious respiratory illness in young infants. RSV is spread directly from one person to another through respiratory droplets when infected people cough or sneeze.

Ontario offers two safe options to help prevent RSV:

1. **Abrysvo™ (RSV Vaccine)** - Given to pregnant individuals at 32–36 weeks gestation.
2. **Beyfortus® (Monoclonal Antibody)** - Given directly to infants.

Typically, only one of these is recommended. High-risk infants may benefit from both, as advised by a healthcare provider.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends the antibody product, Beyfortus®, over the vaccination of the pregnant individual based on its effectiveness, length of protection, and safety profile.

Abrysvo™ for Pregnant Individuals

- **Eligibility:** Abrysvo™ is available for *Ontario residents* at 32–36 weeks of pregnancy if delivery is near or during RSV season (November–April).
- **How It Works:** The vaccine creates antibodies in the mother that transfer to the infant, providing protection from RSV from birth until about six months of age.

Effectiveness and Safety

Abrysvo™ reduces severe RSV illness by 68% in the first three months and 57% within six months; also lowers risk of hospitalization.

Abrysvo™ is safe for most but consult a healthcare provider if you have: The following should specifically be discussed with a health care provider before Abrysvo™ is received:

- Allergy to any of the ingredients
- Severe allergic reaction or breathing problems after other vaccines B
- Bleeding problem or bruise easily
- Infection with a high fever
- Weakened immune system
- Are less than 32 weeks pregnant

Possible Side Effects

Common side effects include mild pain at injection site, headache, muscle aches, nausea, and rare preterm birth occurrences (not statistically significant). If serious reactions occur (e.g., difficulty breathing, swelling, high fever), go to the nearest emergency department.

Considerations for Abrysvo™

- **Illness:** Minor illnesses (e.g., colds) do not require delaying the vaccine, but severe illness does. Please speak to a health care provider if you are unwell before receiving the injection.
- **Other Vaccines:** Can be administered with Tdap, COVID-19, and flu vaccines, but in different limbs.
- **Previous RSV Infection:** The vaccine can be given regardless of prior RSV infection. No specific interval is recommended between RSV infection and RSV vaccination.

How can you lower your risk of getting sick?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or shirt sleeve, not into your hands.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth when possible.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces, like countertops, keyboards, and doorknobs, especially after someone in the household has been sick.
- Stay home if you are sick and protect other people from illness.
- Wear a mask in indoor public settings, especially if you are at higher risk.

More information

- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health: wdgpublichealth.ca
- Ontario Ministry of Health: ontario.ca/RSV
- Contact your primary care provider.