



Protect your newborn baby against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)



What is RSV?

RSV is a common virus that causes coughs and colds. It usually spreads in winter and early spring. RSV can cause serious illness in very young children, especially in babies under three months old.

Why should I protect my baby against RSV?

Every winter in Ireland, half of the new babies born get RSV. Four in every hundred newborn babies end up in hospital due to RSV, with some of these babies needing special treatment in intensive care units.

There is no specific medicine to treat RSV. Immunisation is the best way to protect your baby from RSV.

How can I protect my baby from RSV?

An immunisation called nirsevimab is now recommended for your baby. It helps protect your baby from getting very sick from severe RSV infection over the winter months.

Nirsevimab is a single needle into the baby's thigh. It is free of charge. Your baby will be offered this immunisation before you leave the maternity hospital.

RSV immunisation works differently to a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the immune system to make antibodies to fight off infection. Nirsevimab gives ready-made antibodies to protect your baby.

What are the benefits of protecting my baby from RSV?

Nirsevimab will keep your baby safe from RSV for at least five months over the winter period when RSV levels are highest in the community.

Babies who have had nirsevimab are 80% less likely to need to end up in hospital for their RSV, less likely to need intensive care, and less likely to have complications from RSV. It starts working right away, so your baby is protected when they leave hospital.

Is nirsevimab safe for my baby?

Yes, all studies show that nirsevimab is safe.

What are the side effects of nirsevimab?

Side effects are not common. Less than 1 in 100 babies who receive nirsevimab might get:

- Redness of the skin where the injection was given
- A mild temperature
- A mild rash

Your baby will be monitored closely after the injection.

Nirsevimab immunisation does not contain RSV virus and cannot cause RSV related illness. Your doctor or midwife will answer any questions you have.

Can I do something else to protect my baby from RSV?

Nirsevimab is the only way to protect your baby against severe RSV infection. You can reduce the risk of your baby getting RSV or other cough and cold illnesses by:

- Cleaning hands properly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
- Avoiding crowded or busy places
- Limiting or avoiding contact with people who have coughs and colds, or other infections.

Who should not get nirsevimab?

The midwives or your doctor can advise if they feel that your baby should not get nirsevimab. Your baby must be well at the time when nirsevimab is given to them. If your baby is being monitored for any condition such as problems with their blood, infection, breathing difficulties or low blood sugar, nirsevimab might be delayed until your baby is well.

Where can I learn more?

The midwives or your doctor will talk to you about the nirsevimab immunisation and they will answer any questions that you may have. If you decide to protect your baby from RSV, you will be asked to give verbal consent (permission) for your baby to get the injection.



For more information from the HSE
www.hse.ie/RSV



To view patient information from the Europe Medicine Agency visit:
www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/human/EPAR/beyfortus

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