



Protect your baby against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)



This leaflet covers:

- **What RSV is**
- **How to protect your baby from RSV**
- **What nirsevimab is and how it works**
- **How to get your baby immunised against RSV**

Protect your baby against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

What is RSV?

RSV is a common virus that causes respiratory (breathing) infections in young babies. Babies under six months old get sicker with RSV than older children. That's why it's important to protect them at a very young age.

How many babies get RSV?

Each winter, **1 in 2 babies get RSV.**

Many need medical care from their GP or the emergency department.

3 in 100 babies are hospitalised with RSV, with some babies needing special treatment in intensive care units.

Immunising your baby with nirsevimab (Beyfortus) is the best way to protect your baby from RSV. We explain more in this leaflet.

What is nirsevimab and how does it work?

Nirsevimab is an antibody that can protect against RSV. An antibody is different to a vaccine.

- Nirsevimab gives your baby antibodies directly.
- While a vaccine stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies.

Nirsevimab does not interfere with other childhood vaccines or medicines.

Your baby can have RSV immunisation at the same time as their routine childhood vaccines. It's safe to do this, and there is no need to delay their vaccination appointments.

How can I protect my baby from RSV?

We recommend an immunisation called nirsevimab for your baby. This will protect your baby from severe RSV infection for five months during autumn and winter.

Nirsevimab is a single injection into a baby's thigh muscle. It is free of charge.

How do I get my baby immunised against RSV?

If your baby is born between **1 September 2026 and 28 February 2027**, we offer the RSV immunisation before you go home from the maternity hospital.

If your baby was born between **1 March 2026 and 31 August 2026**, you can get the RSV immunisation with your baby's GP.

If your baby is high risk and under **24 months old**, you can discuss the RSV immunisation with your **paediatrician or neonatologist**. They will arrange the RSV immunisation appointment if it is right for your baby.

High risk can include if a baby:

- is born prematurely
- has a heart or lung condition
- has a weak immune system

What are the benefits of protecting my baby from RSV?

Nirsevimab is very effective. It prevents more than 80% of RSV hospitalisations. It also helps reduce your baby's risk of becoming seriously ill with RSV.

It works straight away so your baby is protected when they are in places where RSV could spread, such as your home or in the community.

Nirsevimab protects your baby against RSV for around five months during autumn and winter when RSV levels are highest.

RSV immunisation is also recommended in other European countries, the USA and Australia. It was licensed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in 2022.

Is nirsevimab safe for my baby?

Nirsevimab is safe and effective.

There is a large body of evidence from:

- clinical trials
- large scientific studies
- nirsevimab immunisation programmes

What are the side effects?

Most babies who get nirsevimab have no side effects. Fewer than 1 in 100 babies have mild side effects. These include:

- redness around where the injection was given
- a temperature
- a mild rash

Some babies may have an allergic reaction after receiving the RSV immunisation. Serious allergic reactions are very rare.

As with all immunisations, your baby will be monitored for 15 minutes after receiving the injection. Your healthcare professional will answer any questions you have.

Who should not get nirsevimab?

Your healthcare professional will advise if nirsevimab is not suitable for your baby.

The RSV immunisation may be delayed if:

- your baby is unwell
- doctors are monitoring them for medical conditions

This may include blood problems, an infection, breathing difficulties or low blood sugar.

Reporting side effects

If you think, your baby has had a side effect after receiving nirsevimab, you can report it to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) at **hpra.ie**. Your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or a family member can also report the side effect to the HPRA.

Where can I learn more?

Your healthcare professional will talk to you about the nirsevimab immunisation. They can answer any questions.

For more information, visit **hse.ie/RSV** or scan the QR code below.



To view patient information from the European Medicines Agency, visit: **ema.europa.eu** or scan the QR code below.



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