

Protecting Infants from RSV



Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is a common respiratory virus that affects the lungs and breathing passages. RSV season starts in the fall and peaks in the winter in most regions of the U.S.

It is spread from person-to-person through close contact, such as when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Symptoms of RSV can include coughing, sneezing, wheezing, runny/stuffy nose, fever, and decrease in appetite. For infants and older adults, an RSV infection can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, and even death.

RSV IMMUNIZATIONS

The CDC recommends two options to protect babies from RSV: vaccination during pregnancy or antibody immunization for infants. Only one of these options is needed for most infants to be protected.

RSV vaccine given during pregnancy:

- Protection passed to baby during pregnancy
- Recommended when 32-36 weeks pregnant
- Usually given during September-January



A dose of RSV antibody is also recommended for the following children between the ages of 8 and 19 months entering their second RSV season:

- Children who have chronic lung disease from being born prematurely
- Children who are severely immunocompromised
- Children with cystic fibrosis who have severe disease
- American Indian and Alaska Native children

RSV antibody given to the baby:

- Provides protection directly to baby
- Recommended for babies younger than 8 months
- Usually given during October-March

The Health Department encourages RSV immunization for those who are eligible. Because RSV antibody immunization is new, it may take time for it to become widely available in our community. [Talk to your healthcare provider to determine which option is best for you and your baby.](#)

These immunizations will not stop RSV from spreading in our community but will protect those people most vulnerable to severe illness. Everyone can continue to help limit the spread of RSV, and other respiratory illnesses, by [practicing healthy habits](#), including washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, cleaning frequently touched surfaces, and staying home when sick.

Stay up to date
during RSV season



fairfaxcounty.gov/health/rsv