



# Protect your new born baby against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

## Protect your baby against RSV

You can now protect your new born baby against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

### What is RSV and why should I protect my baby against it?

RSV is a common virus that causes respiratory infections in young babies. Babies under three months old get sicker with RSV than older children.

Each winter in Ireland one in two new born babies will get RSV and many will need medical care from their GP or the emergency department of a children's hospital. Four out of a hundred new born babies are hospitalised due to RSV, with some babies needing special treatment in intensive care units.

Nirsevimab is the best way to protect your baby from RSV.



## How can I protect my baby from RSV?

An immunisation called nirsevimab is being recommended for your baby. This will protect your baby from severe RSV infection over the coming months.

Nirsevimab is a single injection into the baby's thigh muscle. It is free of charge. You will be offered the immunisation for your baby before you go home from the maternity hospital.

## What is nirsevimab and how does it work?

Nirsevimab is an antibody that can protect against RSV. It is different from a vaccine, which stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies. Instead, nirsevimab provides antibodies directly to protect your infant. Nirsevimab does not interfere with other infant vaccines or medicines and can be given at the same time as other injections.

## What are the benefits of protecting my baby from RSV?

Nirsevimab is very effective and prevents more than 80% of RSV hospitalisations. It also reduces the risk of your baby needing ICU treatment and other complications due to RSV infection.

It works straight away so your baby is protected when they leave hospital and enter environments where RSV could be spreading such as the home or in the community.

Nirsevimab will protect your baby against RSV for at least five months over the winter period when RSV levels are highest.

In Ireland, nirsevimab is recommended by the Department of Health, HSE and the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC). RSV immunisation is also recommended in other countries in Europe, the USA and Australia.

## Is nirsevimab safe for my baby?

Detailed clinical trials, large scientific studies and experiences from other nirsevimab immunisation programmes in Europe, have found nirsevimab to be safe and effective. Nirsevimab was licensed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in 2022.

## What are the side effects?

Side effects are uncommon. Mild and minor effects are reported in fewer than 1% of babies who receive nirsevimab. These include:

- redness of the skin where the baby got the injection
- mild temperature,
- a mild rash.

Allergic reactions or hypersensitivity are rarely reported. Your baby will be monitored closely after the injection.

The nirsevimab immunisation does not contain RSV and cannot cause RSV related illness.

Your doctor or midwife will answer any queries you have.

### **What are the alternatives?**

If you choose not to give nirsevimab to your baby, they won't be protected against RSV.

RSV will still be circulating in children and adults and your baby may get infected and become unwell.

If you choose not to immunise your baby against RSV you may need to reduce the risk of your baby getting RSV by:

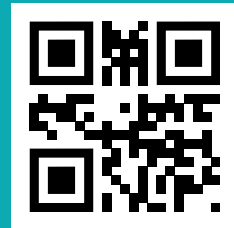
- cleaning hands properly
- avoiding crowded places
- and limiting contact with people who have cold-like symptoms or other infections.

### **Who should not get nirsevimab?**

Your team of midwives or your doctor can advise if they feel that your baby should not get nirsevimab. Your baby must be well when nirsevimab is given. 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?**

Your team of 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 for your baby to get the injection.



For more information from the HSE  
[www.hse.ie/RSV](http://www.hse.ie/RSV)



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

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