IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Immunization for Babies and Young Children

What is Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)?

- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that mainly affects the lungs and breathing. It spreads mostly in late fall and winter.
- Almost all children will get RSV by 2 years of age. Children can get RSV more than once, but it's usually less serious as they get older.
- RSV can cause a runny nose, cough, sore throat, fever, sneezing and wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing). These symptoms usually last 1 to 2 weeks.
- Sometimes, RSV can cause more serious problems, like bronchiolitis (swelling of the small airways in the lungs) or pneumonia (infection in the lungs). Around 20 to 30% of babies with RSV get bronchiolitis or pneumonia. Some babies and young children may need to go to the hospital, or even intensive care.
- Around the world, RSV causes over 100,000 deaths in children under age 5 each year.

Who should get the RSV immunization?

- All infants less than 8 months of age entering, or born during, their first RSV season should get the RSV immunization.
- Children less than 24 months of age at increased risk of severe RSV disease entering their first or second RSV season should also get immunized.
  - » Talk to your healthcare provider to find out if your child is at high risk for RSV.

What is the RSV immunization for babies and young children?

- In Nova Scotia, babies and young children can receive immunization to help protect them from becoming seriously ill with RSV. While it may not prevent infection entirely, the immunization reduces the risk of severe illness from RSV.
- The RSV immunization is a passive immunization.
  - » This means it gives your child ready-made antibodies (tiny, germ-fighting proteins) to protect them from getting very sick with RSV. These antibodies help protect your child right away. Their body doesn't have to make the antibodies like it normally would after getting sick or getting a vaccine.
  - » The protection doesn't last as long as regular vaccines, but it usually lasts about 5 months, which protects your child when severe RSV infection is most common.
- The RSV immunization is given by injection.

Who should NOT receive the RSV immunization?

- Children who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of the RSV immunization.
- Let your healthcare provider know if your child's parent got an RSV vaccine during pregnancy, or if your child has already had RSV this season.

Please read other side.

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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IMMUNIZATION AFTERCARE

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Immunization for Babies and Young Children

People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any immunization there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

What are the possible side effects of the RSV immunization?

As with any other immunization, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.

As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.

Call your healthcare provider if:

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever of 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher in infants less than 2 months old.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher in anyone aged 2 months or older.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

Questions?

If you have any questions about RSV or the RSV immunization for babies and young children, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

Nova Scotia Health Public Health
www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

Immunize Canada
immunize.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.canada.ca/public-health

Canadian Paediatric Society
cps.ca

811
811.novascotia.ca

www.nshealth.ca/immunizations

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