



RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION & AFTERCARE

RSV immunizations for older adults

? What is RSV?

RSV is a viral infection and is a major cause of lower respiratory illness, particularly among infants, young children and older adults. RSV usually occurs in Canada from late fall through to early spring. Reinfections with RSV are common; however, subsequent infections are typically milder until adulthood, when RSV can once again cause serious illness.

? Who should receive the RSV immunization?

The RSV immunization is publicly funded (free of charge) in Nova Scotia for older adults who are:

75 years of age and older

The immune system changes with age and this can make it harder for the body to fight off infections. People over 75 are also more likely to have health conditions that can get worse if they get RSV.

60 years of age and older who are residents of long-term Care (LTC) facilities, or who are admitted to hospital awaiting LTC placement

People 60 years of age and older who are residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities are more likely to have serious outcomes when infected with RSV.

All eligible Nova Scotians are recommended to get the RSV immunization.

? Who should not receive the RSV immunization?

- People who presently have a high fever (over 39.5 °C/ 103°F).
- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to any component of the RSV immunization.

i RSV immunization information

- The RSV immunization is available all year. Although immunization before the start of respiratory virus season is strongly preferred, the RSV immunization may still be administered at any time.
- At this time, people only need to be immunized against RSV once.
- Getting immunized against RSV is the most effective way to prevent RSV illness and RSV-related complications. The immunization will provide protection after about two weeks.

i What to expect after getting the RSV immunization?

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

- The most common side effect is a sore arm that can last for a day or two.
- Other side effects — like fatigue, muscle and joint pain, or a headache — are uncommon.

Medication like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used to manage symptoms such as pain or fever. These medications should not be taken if you have certain medical conditions. Check with your healthcare provider before using either of these medications.

It is safe to get an RSV immunization before, after, or at the same time as a COVID-19 and influenza vaccines.