



# Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for older adults

## ? What is Respiratory syncytial virus (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.

## i RSV vaccine information

- The RSV vaccine is available all year. Although vaccination before the start of respiratory virus season is strongly preferred, the RSV vaccine may still be administered at any time.
- At this time, people only need to be vaccinated against RSV once.
- Getting vaccinated against RSV is the most effective way to prevent RSV illness and RSV-related complications. The vaccine will provide protection after about two weeks.
- It is safe to get an RSV vaccine before, after, or at the same time as a COVID-19 and influenza vaccines.

## ? Who should receive the RSV vaccine?

The RSV vaccine is free 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 long-term care facilities are more likely to have serious outcomes when infected with RSV.

***All eligible Nova Scotians are recommended to get the RSV vaccine.***

## ? Who should not receive the RSV vaccine?

- 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 vaccine.

*Please read other side.*



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



### **What are the possible side effects of the RSV vaccine?**

- As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.
- Less common side effects include fatigue, muscle and joint pain, or a headache.
- There is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

***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.***



### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about Respiratory syncytial virus or the RSV vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: [www.nshealth.ca/public-health](http://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](http://www.nshealth.ca/immunizations)

**Immunize Canada**  
[immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca)

**Public Health Agency of Canada**  
[www.canada.ca/public-health](http://www.canada.ca/public-health)

**811**  
[811.novascotia.ca](http://811.novascotia.ca)

**[www.nshealth.ca/immunizations](http://www.nshealth.ca/immunizations)**

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