

Help protect your baby and reduce the risk of RSV

RSV can be transmitted by coming into contact with saliva droplets from sneezing or coughing into the air and by touching contaminated surfaces or hands. To prevent the spread of **RSV**, it is recommended to practice the following helpful steps:

At all times you should

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water before taking care of your baby.

Recommendations

- Nurse your baby because **breast milk** will provide your baby with natural antibodies.
- Have all family members living with the child who are six months or older, **receive their seasonal flu vaccine**.
- Avoid crowded places (shopping centres, social gatherings, (parties, public transit, etc.).
- Avoid any exposure to cigarette smoke.
- Avoid contact with people who have a cold or cough.

Added measures to practice during a cold infection

- If you have a cold, put on a mask before taking care of your baby. Masks can be purchased in most pharmacies.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before taking care of your baby. If this is not possible, use a hand sanitizer, such as Purell®.
- Avoid kissing your child on the face.

For more information, please call the nurse coordinator of the **RSV** Prevention Program of the CHU Sainte-Justine at 514 345-4720, or visit the following websites :

www.cps.ca
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca (Health Canada)
www.lung.ca
www.rsvshield.ca

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Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is the leading cause of bronchiolitis in babies less than a year old and can require hospitalization. In Quebec, RSV occurs more commonly during the winter months.

Antibody

Your child's doctor has prescribed a special antibody (immunoglobulin) against RSV. This antibody is given to children less than two years of age, if they meet any one of the following criteria :

- Prematurity
- Congenital heart disease
- Pulmonary disease that requires oxygen

Or any other medical reason that may increase the risk of an RSV infection.

Administration of the antibody

For more effective results, the RSV antibody must be injected in the muscle, just like a vaccine, every 28 days (\pm 5 days) between the months of November and March. This represents about five appointments in total, one per month, which requires that you be available on those days. Respecting this schedule will help maintain the consistency of the levels of antibody so that your child is well protected, helping prevent serious RSV or even possible complications and hospitalization.



Side effects

Studies have shown that use of the RSV antibody (palivizumab) is generally well tolerated. Some of the undesirable side effects may include :

Most common:

- Mild pain in the injected area

Least common:

- Fever several hours after the injection
- Irritability

Use warm compresses to alleviate any pain caused by the injection. Give your child acetaminophen, such as Tempra® or Tylenol®, to alleviate pain or to treat fever. Although rare, an allergic reaction may occur soon after administering the injection. It is for this reason that you must stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after the injection as a precautionary measure.

Product Information

Commercial name: SYNAGIS®

Generic name: Palivizumab

Makers: ABBOTT

Product type: A specific antibody that helps the immune system fight against RSV

Managed by: Héma-Québec

Cost: It is very costly, but it is offered free of charge to eligible children

Clinics

Many regions across Quebec have clinics that administer the RSV antibody injection. If possible, the nurse coordinator of the RSV Prevention Program will forward the prescription from your child's doctor to a clinic nearest you. Someone will contact you to schedule your appointments.

If ever your child has to be hospitalized during the RSV season, it will be important for you to let the doctor know that your child is part of the RSV Prevention Program. If your child receives a dose of antibody while hospitalized, please inform the centre where your child usually receives their injections of the dose received while in hospital so that they can ensure proper follow-ups.

Follow-up appointments

Each appointment lasts about one hour.

- Your child is weighed in order to calculate the appropriate dosage to administer based on their weight. If their weight is greater than 6 kg, the dosage will have to be divided and administered in two injections.
- Preparing the product requires a minimum of 20 minutes and cannot be prepared in advance. The nurse must wait for the weigh-in in order to calculate the right dosage according to weight. The product is very costly and must, therefore, be handled with care as to avoid any medication wastage.
- A 15-minute monitoring period is required following the injection.

We often group together as many clients as possible as not to waste any of the product and to enable a larger number of children to benefit from this free protection against RSV. This obliges us to schedule appointments on specific dates. For this reason, we ask that you respect your scheduled appointment. Please note that we will only be able to change your appointment for very exceptional reasons.

Reasons for changing an appointment

Reasons for which an injection can be postponed are as follows:

- Fever (>38.5 C or 101 F)
- Unusual general condition
- Irritability
- Infection or signs of infection
- Decreased appetite

In this case, please advise the person with whom you have an appointment about the change in your child's state of health. Another appointment will be re-scheduled as soon as possible in order to make sure that your child remains well protected.

