

Public Health Alert

To: Ottawa Physicians and Nurse Practitioners
Date: October 2, 2024
From: Dr. Trevor Arnason, Deputy Medical Officer of Health
Subject: Information for the infant and high-risk children RSV prevention program

Dear Colleagues,

In preparation for RSV season, we are sharing additional information to support community providers in the implementation of the infant and high-risk children RSV prevention program. The information below is supplemental to the previous public health alert shared on [September 18, 2024](#).

Product Information & Eligibility

For the 2024-2025 RSV season, two products are available through the publicly funded program: a monoclonal antibody (Beyfortus®) for infants and high-risk children or an RSV vaccine (Abrysvo™) administered during pregnancy to protect the infant through the passive transfer of maternal antibodies. **IMPORTANT: Abrysvo™ IS NOT TO BE ADMINISTERED TO INFANTS.**

Please note: The use of monoclonal antibody (mAb) Beyfortus® is the recommended option for protection of infants from RSV this season. This is in alignment with National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommendations for the use of mAb product in infants over the vaccination of pregnant individuals based on the efficacy, duration of protection, and favourable safety profile of the mAb product Beyfortus®

Pregnant individuals and their health care providers should discuss the use of the vaccine in cases when the pregnant individual may not agree to use of mAb when the infant is born or where it may not be available to their infant (e.g., not giving birth in Ontario).

Only one option of either a) vaccination in pregnancy or b) the mAb product in infancy is recommended except in certain circumstances (e.g., high-risk infant born to a vaccinated mother or infants born within 14 days of the mother having received the vaccine).

Monoclonal antibody (mAb) for infants: Beyfortus® (Nirsevimab)

Eligibility includes Ontario residents who are:

- Born in 2024 prior to the RSV season
- Born during the 2024–25 RSV season (November to April)
- Children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable from severe RSV disease through their second RSV season, with:
 - chronic lung disease of prematurity (CLD), including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, requiring ongoing assisted ventilation, oxygen therapy or chronic medical therapy in the 6 months prior to the start of RSV season
 - Note: Children who were < 12 months of age and approved for coverage in the previous RSV season for chronic lung disease and bronchopulmonary dysplasia remain eligible.
 - hemodynamically significant congenital heart disease (CHD) requiring corrective surgery or are on cardiac medication for congestive heart failure or diagnosed with moderate to severe pulmonary hypertension
 - severe immunodeficiency
 - Down Syndrome / Trisomy 21
 - cystic fibrosis with respiratory involvement and/or growth delay
 - severe congenital airway anomalies impairing the clearing of respiratory secretions

Vaccination for pregnant people: Abrysvo™

Eligibility is for pregnant individuals at 32-36 weeks pregnant who are Ontario residents and will deliver during RSV season (November to April).

IMPORTANT: Abrysvo™ IS NOT TO BE ADMINISTERED TO INFANTS. This vaccine is only approved for those age 18 years and older. Please be extra cautious in separating these products to avoid a medication administration error.

Product Distribution & Ordering:

Beyfortus®: Hospitals and large pediatric centres can anticipate distribution directly from the Province to these locations for immunizing newborns or eligible patients receiving care who have not yet had mAb. They will receive information from the Province on this process.

Community providers can order from Ottawa Public Health for their patients who did not receive mAb in hospital or were born in 2024 prior to the RSV season.

We expect supply of the mAb product Beyfortus® starting mid-October. The order form is available now at ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp. Orders will not be processed until product is available in our centres.

For infants without a health care provider, not immunized in hospitals, they will be able to access mAb through [Kids Come First clinics](#) including OPH community clinics.

Abrysvo™: The vaccine is available to order now from Ottawa Public Health's Vaccine Distribution Centres for pregnant patients. The order form is available at ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp.

Adverse Event Following Immunization Reporting:

- Beyfortus® is a monoclonal antibody. As such, reports of suspected side effects should be submitted through the Health Canada [Side Effect Reporting Form](#)
- Abrysvo™ adverse event reports can be reported to Ottawa Public Health using the [Adverse Event Following Immunization Forms](#).

Resources:

For providers:

- Beyfortus® product information and guidance: [Infant and High-risk Children Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) Prevention Program Guidance for Health Care Providers – Beyfortus® \(Nirsevimab\)](#)
- Abrysvo™ product information and guidance: [Infant and High-risk Children Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) Prevention Program Guidance for Health Care Providers – Abrysvo™](#)
- [Abrysvo™ Product Monograph](#)
- [Beyfortus® Product Monograph](#)

Additional information on the RSV prevention program can be found on the Ontario.ca health care providers page: [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) prevention programs | ontario.ca](#)

For patients:

- Ministry of Health's RSV prevention program page for the general public: [ontario.ca/rsv](#)
- Ottawa Public Health's respiratory illness page: [ottawapublichealth.ca/respviro](#)
- Parenting resources can be found at [parentinginottawa.ca](#)