

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccines

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What are the RSV vaccines?

There are 3 Health Canada approved RSV vaccines that protect against infection from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The vaccines are either protein subunit vaccines (Abrysvo® and Arexvy) or an mRNA vaccine (mResvia®).

Who should get an RSV vaccine?

RSV vaccine for older adults: Beginning in fall 2026, B.C. is introducing a time-limited RSV vaccine program for older adults. One dose of an RSV vaccine (mResvia®) is recommended and free for:

- Adults 75 years of age and older
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) people 60 years of age and older

Indigenous people may be at increased risk of serious illness from RSV due to health inequities from settler colonialism.

Only one dose of vaccine is recommended for protection. People who previously received a dose of any RSV vaccine are not eligible for a dose of mResvia®.

Individuals eligible for mResvia® can call the Service BC Provincial Contact Centre at 1-833-838-2323 (toll free) or visit their local health authority website to find locations providing the vaccine.

An RSV vaccine is recommended, but not provided free, for people at high risk of severe disease, including:

- Adults 65 to 74 years of age with certain chronic health conditions
- Those 18 years of age and older who:
 - Are residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
 - Had a lung transplant

- Had a stem-cell transplant
- Are on home oxygen or require oxygen therapy
- Are receiving dialysis

RSV vaccines in pregnancy: One RSV vaccine, Abrysvo®, is recommended, but not provided free, for people who are pregnant to protect their baby from RSV disease. The vaccine should be given between 28 to 36 weeks of pregnancy. It's important to get the vaccine at least 2 weeks before giving birth to allow protective antibodies to pass to the baby.

If you are not eligible for a free RSV vaccine, you can buy one from most pharmacies and travel clinics. Some health insurance plans may cover the cost of the vaccine. Check with your provider.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

What are the benefits of the vaccines?

The vaccines are the best way to protect against RSV infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease. When you get immunized, you may help protect others as well.

Where to get immunized

Individuals eligible for the RSV vaccine for older adults can contact the call centre at **1-833-838-2323** to find out where you can get immunized.

You can also check with [pharmacies](#) or your health authority for locations that are providing the vaccine:

- [Fraser Health](#)
- [Interior Health](#)
- [Island Health](#)
- [Northern Health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

What are the possible reactions after the vaccines?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get an RSV vaccine than to get sick with RSV.

Common reactions to the vaccines may include soreness, swelling or redness at the injection site. Fever, tiredness, headache, muscle or joint soreness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and swelling of the lymph nodes in the armpits may also occur.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

For more information on Reye Syndrome, visit [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome](#).

Rare cases of Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) have been reported in people 65 years of age and older who received the Abrysvo® and Arexvy vaccines. GBS can result in weakness and paralysis of the body's muscles. It most commonly occurs after infections, but in rare cases can occur after some vaccines.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine. There is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This happens in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine. Symptoms may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this reaction occurs, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

After getting the RSV vaccine, you may be contacted to participate in a study monitoring the safety of the vaccine. To learn more about the

Canadian National Vaccine Safety (CANVAS) Network study, visit <https://canvas-network.ca>.

Who should not get an RSV vaccine?

Speak with a health care provider if you had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any RSV vaccine or any part of the vaccine.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. If you have concerns, speak with your health care provider.

What is respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infection?

Respiratory syncytial virus is a common virus that infects the lungs and airways. It usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Symptoms of RSV include a runny or stuffy nose, coughing, wheezing, fever, sore throat and loss of appetite.

RSV infection can result in more serious illnesses such as bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways of the lungs) and pneumonia (lung infections). It can also lead to worsening of other medical conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Infants and children under 2 years of age, older adults and those with underlying medical conditions are most at risk of severe disease that may require hospitalization. Severe RSV disease can be fatal.

How is RSV infection spread?

RSV is spread by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. The virus can also spread when you touch tiny droplets from a cough or sneeze on another person or object, and then touch your eyes, mouth or nose before washing your hands.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for immunization. Children under the age of 19, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations. For more information on mature

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minor consent visit [HealthLinkBC File #119 The Infants Act, mature minor consent and immunization](#).

For more information

For more information on immunizations, visit [Immunizations](#).



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority