

RSV Vaccination in Pregnancy

Abrysvo (RSV Vaccine)

What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)?

RSV is a common virus that can infect people of all ages. It can cause a range of respiratory illnesses – from mild colds to severe conditions like bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways) or pneumonia (infection of the lungs).

RSV is one of the most common causes of hospitalisation in babies and young children in Queensland. Almost all children experience at least one RSV infection within the first two years of life. While most people with RSV will recover within about a week, some people, particularly babies and young children, can become very unwell and require hospitalisation.

What is Abrysvo?

Abrysvo is an RSV vaccine that is recommended during pregnancy between 28 to 36 weeks gestation and provides protection to a newborn baby against severe RSV disease.

When Abrysvo is given during pregnancy, the immune system produces antibodies to RSV in the first weeks after the injection. These antibodies are passed on to an unborn baby and protects them from severe RSV disease from the moment they are born.

Getting the recommended vaccines during pregnancy is an important part of prenatal and antenatal care. There are other recommended vaccines in pregnancy. Your immunisation provider will be able to tell you more about these, and the best way to protect your baby from birth.

Is Abrysvo safe and effective?

Yes. Abrysvo is a safe and effective vaccine that reduces the risk of severe RSV infection in newborn babies for up to 6 months from birth.

Like other vaccines, the most common reported side effect is soreness, redness or swelling at the vaccination site. Other mild side effects can include fatigue, headache and muscle pains. These reactions are almost always minor and temporary.

Abrysvo has been determined by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to be safe and effective and was approved for use during pregnancy in Australia in March 2024.

As with all medicines, very rare side effects can occur. These can include Guillain-Barre syndrome (a rare form of nerve inflammation) and severe hypersensitivity reactions (a bad allergy or anaphylaxis). Services that provide immunisation are equipped to manage a rare but potentially serious reaction, should one occur. You can call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for non-urgent advice on managing side effects. In an emergency always call 000.

How is Abrysvo given and can it be given with other vaccines?

Abrysvo is given in the same way as most vaccines. This is by intramuscular injection, usually in the deltoid muscle (upper arm).

A single dose of Abrysvo is recommended in pregnancy between 28 to 36 weeks to provide protection to a newborn baby from birth. It's best to receive Abrysvo at least 14 days before delivery to give the baby time to receive the full benefit of the vaccine.

Abrysvo can be safely given at the same time as other vaccines that are routinely recommended during pregnancy, including influenza, pertussis (whooping cough) and COVID-19.

Who should not be given Abrysvo?

Those with a moderate or severe acute illness should usually wait until they have recovered before receiving Abrysvo. Anyone with a history of serious allergic reactions to Abrysvo or any of its components should not receive this vaccine. This can be discussed with your immunisation provider.

Should newborn babies also receive the RSV immunisation (nirsevimab) at birth?

Nirsevimab is an RSV immunisation that protects newborn babies and young children from severe RSV disease.

If Abrysvo was given during pregnancy, newborn babies are not usually recommended to receive nirsevimab as well, unless they have specific condition(s) associated with increased risk of severe RSV disease or are born within 14 days of Abrysvo being given.

All babies born without protection from the Abrysvo vaccine given during pregnancy are recommended to receive nirsevimab at birth.

Your immunisation provider will be able to advise you if your child is recommended to receive nirsevimab.

How is the safety of immunisation monitored in Queensland?

Queensland Health closely monitors and reports to the TGA all adverse events following immunisation that are reported. If you experience any unexpected side effects after receiving a vaccine, you should discuss this with your immunisation provider, or GP who can report on your behalf.

How will Abrysvo be recorded?

Abrysvo will be recorded in the same way as other vaccines on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). You can access your AIR statement online at MyGov (www.my.gov.au).

Looking for more information or have questions?

You can ask your immunisation provider for more information.

Further information is also available online by scanning the QR code below or visiting <https://www.vaccinate.initiatives.qld.gov.au/what-to-vaccinate-against/rsv-immunisation>

