

## Advice for health professionals

**Please distribute to all doctors, nurses and other staff in your practice or service**

1. From 3 February 2025 a new RSV maternal vaccine, Abrysvo®, will be available on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for pregnant women from 28 to 36 weeks gestation.
2. Maternal vaccination with Abrysvo® protects newborn babies from severe RSV in the first 6 months of life through the transfer of maternal antibodies to the foetus during pregnancy.
3. Abrysvo® is the only RSV vaccine approved for use in pregnant women. (Note: Arexvy® vaccine should not be given to pregnant women.)
4. A single dose of Abrysvo® should be offered to **all** pregnant women year round at the 28-week antenatal appointment and can be given at the same time as pertussis and influenza vaccines.
5. From 17 March 2025, infants not protected from RSV by maternal vaccination or who have certain medical risk factors for severe RSV disease, will be offered nirsevimab, a monoclonal antibody.

### Why is RSV prevention in infants important?

- RSV infects up to 90% of children within the first 2 years of life and is the leading cause of hospitalisation due to lower respiratory tract disease such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia in infants aged <6 months.
- Most infants hospitalised with RSV disease are otherwise healthy. However, those with medical risk factors have an increased risk of severe disease.

### Maternal RSV vaccine recommendations and timing

- Abrysvo® is the only RSV vaccine available for administration to pregnant women to protect infants from birth and up to 6 months of age.
- **From 3 February 2025**, a single dose of Abrysvo® is recommended between 28 to 36 weeks gestation year-round and will be available under the National Immunisation Program.
- Abrysvo® should be offered year-round at the 28-week antenatal appointment to ensure high level of antibodies are transferred to the baby before birth and maximise protection for babies who are born prematurely. If not given at 28 weeks Abrysvo® should be given at the earliest next opportunity.
- Abrysvo® can be co-administered with other antenatal vaccines including pertussis (also given at the 28-week antenatal visit) and influenza vaccines. For further information on co administration see the RSV chapter of the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

### Infants not protected through maternal RSV vaccination or with risk factors for severe RSV will be offered nirsevimab

- From **17 March 2025**, nirsevimab (brand name Beyfortus™), an RSV long-acting monoclonal antibody, will be funded by NSW Health and offered to eligible infants and children to provide them with immediate protection against RSV. Refer to the [NSW Health RSV Prevention Program - eligibility information](#) at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/respiratory-syncytial-virus.aspx>

- Nirsevimab is only for use in infants and is not licensed for use in adults. Refer to the [NSW Health RSV Prevention Program - Clinician Guide](#) for further information.
- Nirsevimab will be available for general practitioners (GPs), Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs) and community health centres to order for children up to 24 months of age who remain at risk of severe RSV and infants requiring catch up as detailed in the [NSW Health RSV Prevention Program - eligibility information](#). See '**Ordering**' below for more information.

## Clinical Decision Aid

Clinical decision aids are available to determine an infant's eligibility to receive nirsevimab at birth or for children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable to severe RSV. Refer to '**Further Information**'.

## Webinars

Register for the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) *Australian RSV immunisation update – new funded programs for infant protection* webinar on Thursday 6 February 2025 at <https://ncirs.org.au/ncirs-webinar-series/upcoming-australian-rsv-immunisation-update-new-funded-programs-infant>. The NSW Health RSV Prevention Program webinar held on 6 November 2024 is also available at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/respiratory-syncytial-virus.aspx>.

## Ordering

From **Monday 20 January 2025**, immunisation providers will be able to order supplies of Abrysvo® through the [NSW Vaccine Centre](#) webpage. Deliveries will commence from Monday 20 January 2025, but Abrysvo® NIP vaccine supply must not be administered to pregnant women until the program starts on 3 February 2025.

Nirsevimab will be available to order on the NSW Vaccine Centre webpage from **Monday 10 March 2024**. Primary care immunisation providers such as GPs, AMSs and community health centres can order nirsevimab for eligible children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable to severe RSV disease and infants requiring catch up using the '*nirsevimab order form*' on the NSW Vaccine Centre web portal. One form for each child must be completed indicating the patient's eligibility to receive nirsevimab.

## Checking and Reporting to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

Immunisation providers are required to check an individual's vaccination status on the AIR prior to administering any vaccine. Pregnant women should be advised to bring their digital AIR Immunisation History Statement with them to all antenatal appointments to confirm their vaccination history. The AIR has been updated to accept records of Abrysvo. All vaccination encounters must be reported to the AIR.

### "Yellow" Antenatal Card

Maternal vaccinations received during a woman's pregnancy should be clearly documented on the "yellow" antenatal card or other antenatal cards used in private settings. Clinicians will be required to confirm a newborn infant's eligibility for nirsevimab at birth based on the mother's vaccination record.

## Further information

Additional information for clinicians about the RSV immunisation products and RSV Prevention Program is available in the NSW Health RSV Prevention Program - Clinician Guide at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/respiratory-syncytial-virus.aspx>

## Resources

- [Australian Immunisation Handbook respiratory syncytial virus](#)
- NSW Health [Vaccinations before, during and after pregnancy](#) webpage
- [Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\): Frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) | NCIRS – clinical FAQs](#)