

The RSV Immunization For Your Child: What Parents Need To Know

Q&A

Q: What is RSV?

A: Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a respiratory infection caused by a virus. Babies, kids, and adults can get it. It can cause mild symptoms, but sometimes — **especially in babies** — it can lead to severe difficulty breathing, hospitalization, and even death.

Q: Who should get the RSV immunization?

A: In addition to older adults and some high-risk children, infants 0-8 months old should get the RSV immunization. The RSV immunization is available for infants from October to March.

Q: Why does my baby need the RSV immunization?

A: RSV is one of the most common causes of respiratory (lung) infections in children of all age groups. However, babies are more likely to get very sick from RSV because their immune systems are still developing, and their smaller airways are also more likely to get inflamed. Babies can develop bronchiolitis, pneumonia, or even apnea, which is when they suddenly stop breathing. The RSV immunization can help protect them.

Q: How does the RSV immunization work?

A: The RSV immunization is an antibody that provides temporary protection; it is not a vaccine. The antibody protects against RSV for about 6 months and then disappears – leaving your child's immune system unchanged.

Q: How effective is the RSV immunization?

A: Studies show the RSV immunization reduces the risk of severe RSV by about 80%*. Protection is most effective in the weeks right after the immunization is given and lessens over time. The RSV immunization does not provide long-term protection against RSV, but it does protect infants when they are most at risk of getting very sick from RSV.

Q: What are the possible side effects of the RSV immunization?

A: Side effects after the RSV immunization are uncommon. The most common side effects are pain, redness, or swelling where the injection was given, and a rash. Serious allergic reactions are extremely rare. If you have any questions about side effects from the RSV immunization, talk with your child's health care provider.

Q: Where can I learn more?

A: You can learn more about RSV and the RSV immunization for infants from the CDC by scanning the QR code.

