

# WebMD<sup>®</sup>

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SUMMER 2025



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# THE LATEST ON RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS

## ARE GRANDMA AND GRANDPA PROTECTED?

RSV vaccines are recommended for all adults over age 75 and any adults over 60 who have risk factors for severe illness from RSV. A new study found that if just 1 in 5 adults over age 65 got the RSV vaccine, it would reduce RSV-related outpatient hospital visits by 10% and hospitalizations and in-hospital deaths by nearly 15%. More vaccinated older adults would lead to even greater improvement in these areas. What's more, when grandma and grandpa get the vaccine, it provides an added layer of protection for moms, babies, mothers-to-be, and the babies they carry. Are your parents vaccinated?

SOURCE: *Vaccine*

# 6,300 to 15,000

Estimated number of RSV deaths in the last RSV season. Infants and older adults are at greatest risk.

SOURCE: CDC

## SIDS SURGED—IS RSV TO BLAME?

Rates of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and a subtype of it, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), surged from June to December 2021. In a recent study, researchers drilled down to find out why. They found that the surge in sudden deaths coincided with the time when COVID prevention measures, which also helped prevent the flu and RSV, were relaxed. At the same time, RSV cases soared. While SUID cannot be the cause of death when an infant dies from RSV, the study suggests that infection with RSV may exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and risk factors for sudden unexpected infant death.

SOURCE: *JAMA Pediatrics*

# No.1

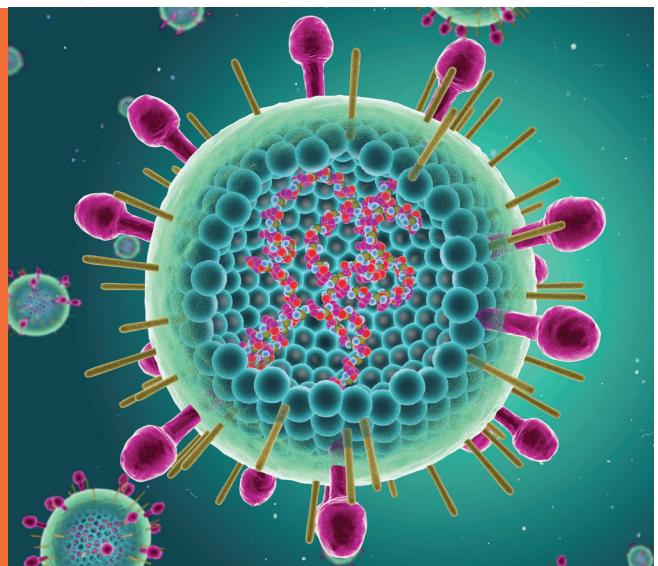
RSV's rank among causes of infant hospitalization in the U.S.

SOURCE: CDC

## MOVING TARGET

Drugs that fight viruses often target and disable proteins on the surface of the virus. But the unusual construction of the RSV surface, which consists of tiny, bending, threadlike structures, has prevented scientists from figuring out which proteins would make the best targets—until now. A new technology has allowed researchers to take extremely detailed pictures of the virus. The images revealed that proteins on the surface of RSV, called F proteins, must partner up to make themselves strong enough to invade healthy human cells. The researchers speculate that a drug targeting these proteins might weaken the virus and stop its spread through the body.

SOURCE: *Nature Communications*



# TAKE THE TEST

See what you know about RSV so you're ready when the season starts

By Sonya Collins

Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor

- When is the best time for eligible babies born outside of RSV season to receive preventive antibody treatment?
  - ☐ A. Once RSV season begins
  - ☐ B. Just before RSV season begins
- Who is at highest risk for serious illness, hospitalization, and death from RSV?
  - ☐ A. People who have never had RSV before
  - ☐ B. Infants and older adults
- Can you get RSV in the offseason outside of the late fall and winter?
  - ☐ A. Yes
  - ☐ B. No
- How long can RSV survive on hard surfaces, such as tables and countertops?
  - ☐ A. Hours
  - ☐ B. Days



## ANSWERS:

- 1. B.** Babies who are eligible for RSV preventive antibody treatment, who were born after the last RSV season, should get it in the offseason just before the next season starts.
- 2. B.** Infants and older adults are most likely to go to the hospital or die from RSV.
- 3. A.** While RSV season is typically recognized as starting in the fall, peaking in the winter, and ending in the spring, cases can unexpectedly start to rise before that time. In 2021, for example, RSV cases started spiking in June.
- 4. A.** RSV droplets, from a cough or a sneeze, can live on hard surfaces for hours. They don't survive as long on soft surfaces, like facial tissue and the skin.





# How fast can RSV turn

## into a serious lung infection during RSV season?

### INDICATION

Beyfortus is a prescription medicine used to help prevent a serious lung disease caused by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in:

- Newborns and babies under 1 year of age born during or entering their first RSV season.
- Children up to 24 months of age who remain at risk of severe RSV disease through their second RSV season.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Your child should not take Beyfortus if your child has a history of serious allergic reactions to nirsevimab-alip or any of the ingredients in Beyfortus.

**Please see additional Important Safety Information and Brief Summary of Patient Information on the following pages.**

You are encouraged to report side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

 **Beyfortus<sup>®</sup>**  
(nirsevimab-alip) | 50 mg  
100 mg  
Injection



# Join the 6,000,000 moms\* and counting who've protected their babies with **Beyfortus**<sup>®</sup> (nirsevimab-alip) | 50 mg 100 mg Injection



Unlike vaccines, which work by helping train your child's body to make antibodies, Beyfortus is a preventive antibody, which means it can provide your child with the antibodies they lack. Beyfortus may not protect all children.



Beyfortus helps protect against serious RSV lung infection that may require trips to the doctor, urgent care, ER, or hospital.



Beyfortus is given directly to your baby and provides fast-acting protection against serious RSV lung infection.



Beyfortus is CDC recommended for babies before their first RSV season.

## Ask your child's doctor about Beyfortus today.

\*Estimated based on sales data (through Oct 2024).

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Before your child receives Beyfortus, tell your healthcare provider about all of your child's medical conditions, including if your child:

- has ever had a reaction to Beyfortus.
- has bleeding or bruising problems. If your child has a problem with bleeding or bruises easily, an injection could cause a problem.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines your child takes, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Your infant should not receive a medicine called palivizumab if they have already received Beyfortus in the same RSV season.



# Just like that.

Even though severe RSV is uncommon,  
it's still the top cause of hospital stays  
in babies under age 1.



Ask about Beyfortus before  
your baby's first RSV season.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Serious allergic reactions have happened with Beyfortus. Get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:

- swelling of the face, mouth, or tongue
- difficulty swallowing or breathing
- unresponsiveness
- bluish color of skin, lips, or under fingernails
- muscle weakness
- severe rash, hives, or itching

The most common side effects of Beyfortus include rash and pain, swelling, or hardness at the site of your child's injection. These are not all the possible side effects of Beyfortus. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions about side effects.

**Please see Brief Summary of Patient Information on the following page.**

You are encouraged to report side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.

Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

## sanofi

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<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Rx Only</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BEYFORTUS® (Bay for tus) (nirsevimab-alip) injection, for intramuscular use</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary of Information about BEYFORTUS</b></p>
<p><b>What is BEYFORTUS?</b></p> <p>BEYFORTUS is a prescription medicine that is used to help prevent a serious lung disease caused by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newborns and babies under 1 year of age born during or entering their first RSV season.</li> <li>• children up to 24 months of age who remain at risk of severe RSV disease through their second RSV season.</li> </ul> <p>BEYFORTUS is an antibody that contains nirsevimab-alip which is used to help prevent RSV disease for 5 months. It is not known if BEYFORTUS is safe and effective in children older than 24 months of age.</p>
<p><b>Your child should not receive BEYFORTUS if your child</b> has a history of serious allergic reactions to nirsevimab-alip or any of the ingredients in BEYFORTUS. See the end of this Summary of Information for a complete list of ingredients in BEYFORTUS.</p>
<p><b>Before your child receives BEYFORTUS, tell your healthcare provider about all of your child's medical conditions, including if your child:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has ever had a reaction to BEYFORTUS</li> <li>• has bleeding or bruising problems. If your child has a problem with bleeding or bruises easily, an injection could cause a problem.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tell your child's healthcare provider about all the medicines your child takes,</b> including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Your infant should not receive a medicine called palivizumab if they have already received BEYFORTUS in the same RSV season.</p>
<p><b>How is BEYFORTUS given?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEYFORTUS is given as an injection, usually in the thigh (leg) muscle, by your child's healthcare provider.</li> <li>• <b>Your child should receive BEYFORTUS before or during the RSV season.</b> RSV season is the time of year when RSV infections are most common, usually occurring fall through spring. Your healthcare provider can tell you when the RSV season starts in your area.</li> <li>• <b>Your child may still get RSV disease after receiving BEYFORTUS.</b> Talk to your child's healthcare provider about what symptoms to look for.</li> <li>• If your child has heart surgery, your child's healthcare provider may need to give your child an additional BEYFORTUS injection soon after surgery</li> </ul>

<p><b>What are the possible side effects of BEYFORTUS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Serious allergic reactions</b> have happened with BEYFORTUS. Get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms of a serious allergic reaction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ swelling of the face, mouth or tongue</li> <li>○ difficulty swallowing or breathing</li> <li>○ unresponsiveness</li> <li>○ bluish color of skin, lips or under fingernails</li> <li>○ muscle weakness</li> <li>○ severe rash, hives or itching</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>The most common side effects of BEYFORTUS include</b> rash, and pain, swelling or hardness at the site of your child's injection. These are not all of the possible side effects of BEYFORTUS. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.</p>
<p><b>General information about the safe and effective use of BEYFORTUS.</b></p> <p>Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about BEYFORTUS that is written for health professionals.</p>
<p><b>What are the ingredients in BEYFORTUS?</b></p> <p><b>Active ingredient:</b> nirsevimab-alip</p> <p><b>Inactive ingredients:</b> arginine hydrochloride, histidine, L-histidine hydrochloride monohydrate, polysorbate 80, sucrose and water for injection.</p>
<p>The risk information provided here is not comprehensive. To learn more, talk about BEYFORTUS with your health care provider. For the FDA- approved product labeling or more information go to <a href="http://www.beyfortus.com">www.beyfortus.com</a> or call 1-855-239- 3678 (1-855-BEYFORTUS).</p>
<p>Manufactured by: AstraZeneca AB, Södertälje, Sweden SE-15185 US License No. 2059</p> <p>Distributed by: Sanofi Pasteur, Inc., Swiftwater, PA 18370 USA</p> <p>BEYFORTUS is a trademark of the Sanofi group of companies.</p> <p>©AstraZeneca 2024</p> <p>MAT-US-2404205-v1.0-04/2024</p>



# ILLNESS PREVENTION FOR INFANTS: THE BASICS

Inform yourself now to be ready when cold and flu season starts

By Kendall K. Morgan

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD,  
WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

Some of the illnesses you'll want to prevent your baby from getting in the first year may sound unfamiliar, and there's a good reason for that, says Lori Handy, MD, an associate director of the Vaccine Education Center and an infectious diseases doctor at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.

"I think it's really helpful for new parents to understand that a lot of infections we try to prevent in new babies are unfamiliar to parents due to the success of vaccines," Handy says. "Meningitis due to bacteria or pneumococcus we see infrequently because of vaccines. Diphtheria and polio we don't see at all because of the success of vaccines."

## PLAN AHEAD

Handy says getting your baby vaccinated on time will protect them when they're most at risk for severe illnesses. To make sure you're ready, ask your questions now.

"In thinking ahead about a new child, it's a good time to talk to your pediatric provider," Handy says. "You'll want to understand how they deliver vaccines and how easy it is to get an appointment. Make a plan to vaccinate according to the recommended schedule."

## RSV PREVENTION

Handy says parents should know it's a "great moment" for preventing RSV, which is the leading cause of infant hospitalizations. Babies born during or entering their first



RSV season can now get a shot of RSV antibodies along with their other vaccines to protect against the virus. Giving your infant antibodies also can "prevent hospitalization and reduce medical visits a child may need due to RSV," Handy says.

## TAKE STEPS YEAR-ROUND

Handy recommends ensuring parents, other family members, and childcare providers are current on their vaccines, too. Frequent handwashing and avoiding people who are sick also are key.

Remember that "certain viruses are very seasonal," Handy says. "Others circulate year-round. Any time of year, a child may get sick with something."

Taking steps for illness prevention is essential for keeping your infant—and your whole family—healthy all year long.

# A GROWING PROTECTION

## How your baby's immune system forms over time

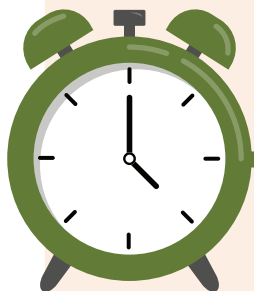
By Rachel Reiff Ellis Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

**A baby's immune system develops over the first 1,000 days of their life. Here are some key milestones:**

**IN UTERO:** The immune system starts developing in the womb. Babies initially get their mother's antibodies through the placenta during the third trimester (last three months) of pregnancy. The type of antibodies your baby gets depends on your levels of immunity. Antibodies help immune systems "remember" a previous infection to help get rid of it. By using the mother's antibodies, babies get some protection, even though they haven't been exposed to germs yet.



**BIRTH:** The mother passes antibodies to the baby through the placenta and breastfeeding, providing immediate protection. But this isn't full protection—your baby's immune system is still strengthening. If your baby is premature, they'll be even more vulnerable to infection because they won't have received as many antibodies as a full-term infant.





**FIRST FEW WEEKS:** The baby's immune system is immature and they are vulnerable to infections. The antibodies they get from their mother are still working at this point, and breastfeeding boosts this immunity, too.



**AGE 3:** Eighty percent of a baby's immune system is set. But it's still considered immature until about age 7. Kids are also often in group settings because of day care and school, and kids often explore the world through their mouths, so germs and sickness are still a big risk. It's important to teach proper handwashing and how to properly cover a cough and sneeze while they're young.



**2 TO 3 MONTHS:** The baby's immune system is considered to be adequately functioning. Protection is ramping up, but your baby is still at high risk for serious illness if they get germs like the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) or the common cold. Your doctor can give the RSV monoclonal antibody to children under age 1 while their immune system is maturing, during or just before RSV season.





# CAN MY CHILD GET SICK IN THE OFFSEASON?

**Risk is lower, but prevention is still crucial**

**By** Rachel Reiff Ellis

**Reviewed by** Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

In most parts of the United States, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) season begins in the fall, peaks during the winter, and declines by spring. People tend to spend more time indoors during colder months in close contact during these months. This increases the risk of respiratory viruses like RSV spreading.

But RSV doesn't take a vacation in the warm months. It's still around and can infect your child. Here's what you need to know.

## UNLIKELY BUT POSSIBLE

It's absolutely possible to get RSV in nonpeak months, but the risk goes down. This is because the virus is circulating at lower levels.

"Outbreaks can occur during the offseason too, especially in settings like day care centers or nursing homes where people are in close contact," says Debbie-Ann Shirley, MD, MPH, clinical associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics and division chief of pediatric infectious disease in the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville.

The timing and severity of RSV season can vary from year to year and community by community, says Shirley.

"Notably, Florida often experiences an earlier onset and a longer duration of RSV season compared to other regions of the country," she says.

## REMAIN VIGILANT

No matter the season, prevention is key. This is especially true for those at highest

risk of severe illness from the infection.

"This includes really young infants, babies born prematurely, and children with heart and lung conditions," says Daniel Smith, MD, an infectious disease specialist with Bryan Health in Lincoln, NE.

Talk to your doctor about how to





THIANCHAI SITTIKONGSAKI/  
VIA GETTY IMAGES

keep your child safe all year, and create habits that will help ward off sickness.

“Whether in season or offseason, parents can help to protect children from RSV by practicing good hand hygiene and avoiding close contact with people who are ill,” Shirley says.

“Families should also avoid smoke exposure, as smoke is harmful to the lungs, especially young, developing ones.”

Practice preventive measures to protect against respiratory viruses all year-round. Talk to a trusted health care provider if you have concerns about RSV and your child.

## WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS

Know these RSV signs in infants:

- + Runny nose
- + Cough
- + Irritability
- + Decreased activity
- + Eating or drinking less
- + Apnea (pauses in breathing for more than 10 seconds)



# VISITOR GUIDELINES

How to keep your baby safe from germs when family comes

By Rachel Reiff Ellis Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

Your long-awaited bundle of joy is here, and grandma, grandpa, aunts, uncles, and cousins are bursting at the seams to meet their newest family member. But along with gifts, they may also arrive with something most unwelcome: illness.

Your newborn's immune system isn't fully formed when they're born, and that leaves them very vulnerable to infection. Your job is to work as the germ gatekeeper in those early days.

"Newborns are very susceptible to getting very sick very quickly, so it's important to try to keep as many people who may be potentially sick away from your baby as possible," says Tanya Altmann, MD, founder of Calabasas Pediatrics, spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and editor-in-chief of the AAP's book collection, *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*.

Katie K. Lockwood, MD, attending physician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Primary Care in Flourtown, PA, suggests limiting early visitors to only those who are "essential."

"Who you consider essential will vary from family to family," Lockwood says. "The first two months are the most important because a newborn's immune system is still developing, and they are at the highest risk for infections during this time period."

## SET EXPECTATIONS

Start the conversation with loved ones well before your baby is born so they know what the early months will look like. For close family who will visit the soonest, have rules set in place.

"Early on, I would limit direct contact as much as possible, and visitors look at, but not touch or hold the baby," Lockwood says.

For visitors who are going to have direct contact, make sure they're well before they come, and have everyone wash their hands upon entering your house, Lockwood says.

"You can drape one of the baby's own blankets over their clothes so that the baby only comes in contact with their own materials instead of your guests' clothes, which may be carrying germs or fragrances that are harmful to newborns," Lockwood says.

She also advises having a firm "no kissing" rule.

"Many germs can be transmitted in saliva, and cold sores, or HSV, which can be deadly to newborns and can be transmitted prior to being visible on one's skin," Lockwood says.

## EMPHASIZE RISK

Not everyone knows what the dangers of an infection like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are for a baby. It may help





ELIJASENOVA VIA GETTY IMAGES

to explain to your family members what could happen. Illnesses that may be minor and seem harmless to adults can be fatal to newborn babies.

“In older kids and adults, RSV causes a really bad cold, but when newborns and young children get it, especially those with underlying

heart or lung disease or anyone under 1 year of age, it can go down to the lungs and cause very severe trouble breathing,” Altmann says. “RSV is the leading cause of hospitalizations for infants under age 1 every year in the United States.”

## SIBLING SAFETY

Tanya Altmann, MD, shares strategies to teach to your baby’s big brothers and sisters.

**+ Practice good handwashing.**

Water, soap, and scrub while singing “Happy Birthday” twice.

**+ Teach proper kiss placement.**

Your baby’s head or feet are good targets for the least germ spread.

**+ Educate them about RSV.** Tell them why it’s important to help protect the baby from germs.



looking to  
**STAY WELL**  
every day



## Fuel Your Body with Good for You Ingredients



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Beautiful flower traditionally thought to help your body's defenses

### LEMONGRASS

Tasty herb commonly thought to be a supportive hand to your overall health



### ROSE HIPS

Tart and tasty herb commonly used to help support your well-being

### ELDERFLOWERS

Light colored flower traditionally considered to help support a healthy lifestyle



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EVERY DAY