

RSV Prevention with Beyfortus – Frequently Asked Questions

What is it?

Beyfortus (Nirsevimab) is an immunization that is given to help babies fight the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Specifically, it is a long-acting antibody to prevent severe RSV-related lung disease. This can include bronchiolitis (inflammation of the airways that lead to the lungs) or pneumonia (inflammation of the lungs) in infants. RSV prevention with Beyfortus reduces the likelihood that a baby has to go to the Emergency Department (ED) or be admitted to the hospital for care.

Who gets it?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends Beyfortus for all babies under 8 months of age during their first RSV season. In Southwest Florida, the RSV season runs from September - April. In addition, high risk (e.g. chronic lung disease, immunocompromised, or with cystic fibrosis) infants ages 8 - 19 months should also receive Beyfortus during their second RSV season.

How well does it work?

Very well - the initial studies done before Beyfortus was approved showed 70-75% effectiveness against needing acute medical care (ED or hospitalization). Studies with real world US data since Beyfortus was approved last year show up to 98% effectiveness against severe RSV requiring hospitalization for infants in their first RSV season. Protection lasts at least 5 months.

If my child gets Beyfortus, does it mean that they won't get RSV?

Not necessarily. RSV is common and spreads quickly among infants in daycare and/or their older siblings who are in school, so most babies are likely to be exposed to the virus. But healthy babies who have received Beyfortus before being infected with RSV are significantly less likely to have to go to the hospital. They may have cold symptoms but are not likely to have severe lung disease.

Can it be given with other routine immunizations?

Yes - but we recommend getting Beyfortus as early as possible during RSV season, so you do not have to wait for your baby's routine shots. Babies born during RSV season should receive the shot in their first week of life for maximum prevention.

Who should NOT get Beyfortus?

- Infants of mothers who received the RSV vaccine at least 14 days before giving birth.
- Infants and children who have had a reaction to Beyfortus or any of its components in the past.

This immunization came out fast - is it “Emergency Use Authorization”?

No - the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) saw the benefits of this preventative treatment and gave it “Fast Track” status - basically putting it in front of the line of other drugs awaiting approval. Beyfortus has received full approval from the FDA.

Will it be covered by my insurance?

Beyfortus will be covered by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program for those who are eligible. It is our understanding that most private insurance plans will also cover most or all of the cost of this immunization but we recommend that you check your particular policy to confirm that it is covered prior to your appointment.

What other RSV prevention options are available?

- Synagis (palivizumab) is a short-acting monoclonal antibody that has been available for high risk infants since 1998. It must be given monthly during RSV season and requires a lengthy approval process for those eligible.
- Abrysvo (RSVpreF) is given once to pregnant women at 32-36 weeks of pregnancy to provide protection for both the mother and the baby. It is also available for adults over age 60.
- Arexvy is available for adults over age 60 only.

Helpful websites:

Cost and Coverage: <https://www.beyfortus.com/about/cost-and-coverage>

FDA Approval Press Release: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-new-drug-prevent-rsv-babies-and-toddlers>

RSV in Florida

<https://epi.ufl.edu/2024/04/05/respiratory-syncytial-virus-or-rsv-in-florida-what-to-know/>

<https://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/respiratory-illness/respiratory-syncytial-virus/index.html>

CDC information about RSV Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/immunizations-protect-infants/index.html>

AAP information about RSV and RSV Prevention: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/RSV-When-Its-More-Than-Just-a-Cold.aspx>