

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunisation for Aboriginal children

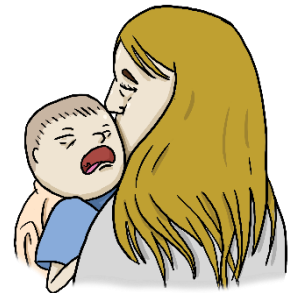
Have you yarned with your health care worker about the new RSV immunisation?

What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that can make babies lungs very sick. Adults and older kids get mild cold-like symptoms, but babies can get serious illness.

What are the symptoms of RSV in a little baby?

- Runny nose
- Fever
- Coughing
- Fast breathing
- Not feeding as well, so fewer wet nappies
- wheezing



It starts with a runny nose and cough, and by day 3 – 5 babies often have very fast breathing (> 60 breaths per minute) and reduced feeds.

What are the symptoms of RSV in an older child?

- Stuffy or runny nose
- Cough/wheeze
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Fast and/or difficulty in breathing
- Loss of appetite



How serious is RSV for babies and children?

RSV causes bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways) and pneumonia (lung infection) and can be bad enough that hospital admission is needed and more often in very young babies or those with existing medical conditions. RSV infection especially in the very young babies can increase the risk of repeated chest infections.

In 2023, more than 150 Aboriginal babies were hospitalised with RSV infection in Western Australia.



What is the best way to prevent RSV?

The best way to prevent RSV is to get your baby immunised before the RSV season, usually April to September. The immunisation will give your child immunity for up to 5 months.

The immunisation medicine is given as an injection, like other injections your child has received.



The RSV Immunisation (Nirsevimab) is FREE for children most at risk of severe infection, including:

- All Aboriginal children born since 1 October 2022

The immunisation does not contain the virus and it cannot give the RSV illness to your baby.

What about influenza and COVID-19?

The best way to prevent the flu is to get the influenza vaccine at the start of each flu season (before winter). The vaccine will give your child protection throughout the winter and can be given to children from 6 months of age. It is free for all West Australians

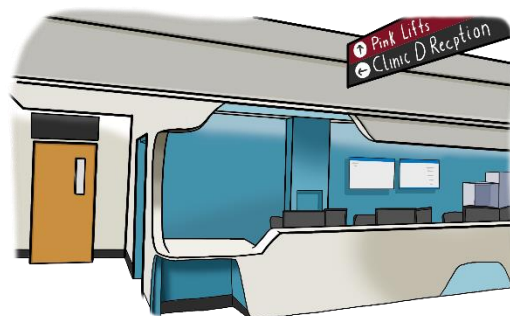
COVID-19 vaccines are currently available for children with medical risk conditions and severely compromised immune systems older than 6 months.

Where can my child receive the free RSV immunisation?

- General practitioner (GP),
- WA Country Health Services (WACHS),
- Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Community Health (CACH) clinics,
- Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS).

Alternatively walk into or book an appointment at the PCH Stan Perron Immunisation Centre, Level 1, Clinic D, from 8.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday. Phone 6456 3721

This program will not be available at pharmacies.



Government of Western Australia
Child and Adolescent Health Service



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