

# RSV vaccines in pregnancy:



## What you need to know

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### What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a contagious respiratory virus. While it usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms, RSV can be a **very serious** illness in infants. RSV is common around the world and is most active in Canada during the fall and winter months (when people in Canada are most likely to catch RSV and become sick).

In December 2023, a **vaccine** that protects against RSV – the RSVpreF vaccine – was approved for use in Canada for people **32 to 36 weeks pregnant**.



### Why should I get the RSV vaccine if I am pregnant?

Infants younger than six months of age are one of the groups most likely to experience **severe RSV infection**, and severe RSV infection in infants can result in **hospitalization** or **intensive care unit (ICU) admission**. In fact, RSV leads to around **16 times** more hospitalizations in young children than influenza (the flu). RSV is also the leading cause of **bronchiolitis** (inflammation of the small airways of the lungs) and **pneumonia** (a lung infection) in infants and very young children – those under one year of age.

Getting immunized against RSV while pregnant gives your baby **protection for up to 6 months** against severe RSV infection after they have been born (please see the section [Passing on immunity: How getting the RSV vaccine while pregnant protects your infant](#)).

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## Passing on immunity: How getting the RSV vaccine while pregnant protects your infant

Getting the RSV vaccine allows your body to produce protective proteins called **antibodies** that specifically protect against RSV infection. When you get immunized against RSV while pregnant, you **pass on** some of these antibodies **to your baby** in the womb (*in utero*). These antibodies give your baby protection for up to 6 months against the severe effects of RSV after they have been born.

**It is safe to receive the RSV vaccine while pregnant. There is no evidence that the RSV vaccine will harm you or your baby.**

**Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, midwife, or local public health office to see if you can receive the RSV vaccine while pregnant.**



For more information, please visit <https://immunize.ca/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv>.

### References

**Public Health Agency of Canada. (2024.) Canadian Immunization Guide. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).**

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