

Antibody to Prevent Serious RSV Disease in Babies

Nirsevimab (*Beyfortus*), a medicine used to prevent respiratory tract infections caused by the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), will be offered to all children born in Finland during the 2025–2026 RSV season. Nirsevimab will also be offered to children under twelve months old who have a high risk of severe RSV infection.

RSV is a common cause of respiratory tract infection in people of all ages. The number of cases tends to increase in late fall and in the winter. The infection spreads easily through, for example, hand contact and sneezing. Almost all children get a respiratory tract infection caused by RSV during early childhood. Most only experience mild cold-like symptoms.

The disease can be serious for small babies. RSV is a common reason for infant hospitalization. In children under twelve months of age (and especially children under three months of age), the virus can cause a lower respiratory tract infection with symptoms such as cough, increased mucus/phlegm production, loss of appetite, fatigue, rapid and superficial breathing, and pauses in breathing. Symptoms can get worse quickly and require urgent hospitalization or even intensive care.

Nirsevimab is an antibody against RSV. It is effective in preventing serious RSV infections. The medicine starts to work almost immediately, and its effect lasts for one RSV season. The antibody is at its most useful when given at the start of the RSV season. Nirsevimab is administered as a single intramuscular injection. Nirsevimab is not a vaccine. It can, however, be given at the same time as vaccines from the vaccination program. If the mother was vaccinated against RSV during pregnancy at least two weeks before giving birth, the baby will not need nirsevimab.

Nirsevimab has been shown to be very safe in clinical studies. The medicine does not contain RSV and cannot cause an RSV infection. Side effects are relatively rare. Potential adverse effects include rash, fever, and redness, swelling, or pain at the injection site.

As with all medicines, an allergic reaction to nirsevimab is a possibility. Please tell your healthcare professional if your child is allergic to nirsevimab or any of the ingredients of the medicine. Please also tell your healthcare professional if your child has a bleeding/clotting disorder or is taking a blood thinner. Contact your healthcare professional immediately if you notice any signs of an allergic reaction or any other symptoms that you find concerning.

Fever in a baby under three months old always requires urgent medical evaluation. In an emergency, always call 112.