

# Protecting Yourself with RSV Vaccines

What immunocompromised\* people should know.

## What is the RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that can cause serious lung and airway infections, especially in infants, older adults, and people with chronic medical conditions.<sup>1</sup> RSV spreads easily from person to person through the air by breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing. It can also spread through direct contact or by touching surfaces with the virus and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.<sup>2</sup>

**For people with weakened immune systems, RSV can lead to severe illness, hospitalization, long-term health problems, and even death.**

## What are the symptoms of RSV?<sup>3</sup>

The most common symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Congestion
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing

## Who is at risk for severe RSV?<sup>4</sup>

- People with weakened immune systems
- People with chronic medical conditions (e.g., lung or heart disease, diabetes)
- Older adults (65+)
- Adults living in congregate living settings (e.g., long-term care, nursing homes, assisted living)
- Infants less than one year old



## RSV immunization is one of the best ways to prevent severe illness

The RSV vaccine is given as a one-time dose prior to respiratory season. You do not need a booster dose annually.

The following groups of adults should get the RSV vaccine:

- All adults 75 years and older
- Adults 60 years and older living in congregate living settings (e.g., long-term care, nursing homes, assisted living)
- Adults 18+ who are at an increased risk for severe RSV

## How can I access the RSV vaccine?

Each province has its own publicly funded RSV vaccine program. Find the most up to date information about your region's program below:

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland & Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Yukon](#)

Vaccines are an important tool and they work best when combined with other strategies like masking, ventilation, and staying home when sick.

Wear a high quality and well-fitting mask (e.g., N95 or equivalent) for added protection against RSV and other respiratory illnesses.<sup>5</sup>

## References

\*Immunocompromised is a term used to describe a weakened immune system that can be caused by a variety of medical conditions and drug treatments

1. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) - Symptoms & causes - Mayo Clinic [Internet]. Mayo Clinic. 2023. Available from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/respiratory-syncytial-virus/symptoms-causes/syc-20353098>
2. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide [Internet]. Canada.ca. 2025. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/respiratory-syncytial-virus.html>
3. Public Health Agency of Canada. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV): Symptoms and treatment [Internet]. Canada.ca. 2025. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv.html#a2>
4. American Lung Association. RSV in adults [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/rsv/rsv-in-adults>

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This resource was developed in partnership with people who have lived experience.

[immunocompromised.ca](https://immunocompromised.ca)

