
Prevention of serious RSV disease in infants with an antibody

This instruction informs parents/guardians of infants about nirsevimab for the prevention of respiratory tract infections caused by RSV.

In Finland, the product will be offered to all children born during the 2024-2025 winter RSV epidemic and to those under three months of age when the epidemic starts. In addition, nirsevimab will be offered to children under one year of age in certain groups at risk of severe RSV infection.

What does RSV mean?

RSV or RS-virus (*respiratory syncytial virus*) is a common cause of respiratory infections in all age groups. The virus spreads easily, for example, through hands or sneezes. There are a lot of infections, especially in late autumn and winter, when we talk about the RSV season or epidemic. Almost all children in early childhood will develop a respiratory infection caused by the RS virus. For most of them, the virus manifests itself as a mild cold, which may be accompanied by an ear infection. For infants, the disease may be severe.

Why is RSV dangerous for infants?

RSV is a common reason for hospitalization of infants. In children under one year of age (especially those under 3 months), the virus can cause inflammation of the lower airways, with symptoms including coughing, mucus, loss of appetite, fatigue, frequent and shallow breathing and breathing stops. The symptoms can quickly get worse, requiring urgent hospital or even intensive care.

What is nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab (*Beyfortus*) is an antibody against the RS virus. It is effective at preventing serious RSV infections. The protective effect starts almost immediately and lasts for one RSV season. The antibody is most useful when administered at the beginning of the RSV-season. It's not a vaccine.

How is nirsevimab administered in practice?

Nirsevimab is given as a single intramuscular injection. Infants born during the RSV season receive it shortly after birth in the maternity hospital. Older infants will receive the antibody at a child health clinic visit. Nirsevimab can be given at the same time as the vaccines in the vaccine program. If the mother has received the RSV vaccine during pregnancy, the baby does not need nirsevimab.

Is nirsevimab safe?

Nirsevimab has been shown in studies to be very safe. The preparation does not contain any RS virus, and it cannot cause an RSV infection. Side effects are relatively rare. Side effects may include, for example, rash, fever or redness, swelling or pain in the injection site.

As with all medicines, you should be prepared for allergic reactions to nirsevimab. Tell the nursing staff if your child is allergic to nirsevimab or any of its ingredients. Tell the staff also if your child has a disorder related to bleeding or clotting or is getting blood thinners. Tell the medical staff immediately if you notice any signs of an allergic reaction or other symptoms that worry you.

If an infant under 3 months of age has a fever, you should always contact Tyks Paediatric and Adolescent Emergency Department (tel. 02 313 1420). Always in an emergency, call 112.