

VACCINE UPDATES



RSV

What is RSV?

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is a virus that causes lower respiratory tract illness. RSV is a common virus that typically causes mild cold-like symptoms that resolve in 1-2 weeks. **Infants and older adults** are at an increased risk from developing severe symptoms leading to hospitalization. According to the CDC, RSV leads to approximately 60,000 – 120,000 hospitalizations and **6,000 – 10,000 deaths each year among adults over 65 in the United States.**

RSV has a higher prevalence during the fall and winter months, similar to the flu virus and is transmitted through coughing, sneezing, and contact with the respiratory virus (touching surfaces, or the face of someone with RSV).

Treatment for RSV is limited and includes managing symptoms and monoclonal antibodies in severe cases. There is currently no antiviral treatment for RSV.

New vaccines and CDC recommendations

Two RSV vaccines have been in production and clinical trials, currently Arexvy and Abrysvo, indicated for individuals over 60 years of age.

In clinical trials, Arexvy (manufactured by GSK, adjuvant and protein-based vaccine) was 82.6% effective against lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD) in those over 60, and 94.6% effective in those over 60 with at least 1 comorbidity (COPD, asthma, heart failure, diabetes mellitus, liver or renal disease). These results were during one season (fall-winter, ~6 months), and one dose of vaccine was given.

Abrysvo (manufactured by Pfizer, mRNA-based vaccine) was similar to Arexvy in clinical trials and evaluated effectiveness by age group and number of symptoms. Compared to placebo, Abrysvo was 66.7% effective against lower respiratory tract disease with 2 or more symptoms and 85.7% effective against LRTD with 3 or more symptoms. These results were also for one season, approximately 7 months.

The most reported side effects to the RSV vaccines include pain at the injection site, fatigue, muscle aches and pains, and headache. These are common adverse reactions among most vaccines.

As of June 21st, 2023, the CDC's advisory committee on immunizations (ACIP) voted to recommend that **adults ages 60 and older may receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.**

What does this mean for you?

For those 60 – 64: The RSV vaccine should be covered under most commercial insurance plans and available at your local pharmacy. Stay tuned for potential availability after September at the office!

For those 65 and older: The RSV vaccine will be covered under Medicare Part D and available at your local pharmacy. Currently, Arexvy appears to be more widely available.

For all patients who receive the RSV vaccine: We recommend waiting until late September to receive the RSV vaccine as the most common season for transmission is in the fall and winter (cooler months). Please report any side effects to the vaccine or send questions about RSV to the pharmacists at the office, Emily and Samm!

A note for our winter travelers: While Arizona does NOT require a prescription for the vaccine, some states are requiring an order from your provider before receiving the vaccine. If you are in a state requiring a prescription, just let us know.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>
2. <https://arexvy.com/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7229a4.htm>