

Your guide to the free **RSV vaccine** for residents living in a care home for older adults

How to protect yourself by having the Respiratory
Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine



What is RSV?

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is an infectious disease of the airways and lungs. RSV infection often causes symptoms similar to a cold, including cough, sore throat, sneezing and runny or blocked nose. It can also make you become wheezy or short of breath and lead to pneumonia and other life-threatening conditions. There is no specific treatment, and most infections will get better by themselves. Every year thousands of older adults need hospital care for RSV, and some of them will die. RSV can be more severe in people with medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or a weakened immune system.



How do you catch RSV?

RSV infections can occur all year round but cases peak every winter.

RSV can spread through coughs and sneezes. You can help to prevent the spread of the virus by covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze (ideally with a tissue, or else into the bend of your elbow), and you can wash your hands frequently to reduce the risk of picking up the virus. Even with these measures, it can be difficult to avoid RSV infection.

The best way to protect yourself is to have the vaccine.

How does the vaccine work?

Almost all older adults will have had several RSV infections during their life. A single dose of vaccine will help to boost protection as you reach the age at highest risk of serious RSV infection.

How will I get my vaccine?

Your local Health and Social Care Trust vaccination team will be visiting your care home and you will be kept informed of when this will happen.

Do I need to have the vaccine every year?

No, a single dose is expected to give you good protection for a few years.

Can I have the RSV vaccine at the same time as my flu vaccine?

RSV isn't normally arranged to be given at the same appointment as your flu vaccines.

In certain clinical circumstances, your vaccination team can safely offer them at the same time.



Can I have the RSV vaccine at the same time as the COVID-19, shingles or pneumococcal vaccine?

Yes, you can have these vaccines at the same time.

Is there anybody who shouldn't have the vaccination?

Almost everybody can have the vaccine, but tell your vaccination team if you have ever had a serious allergy to a vaccine, or any of the ingredients.

If you have a minor illness such as a cold, you can receive the vaccine, but if you are very unwell or have a fever, the vaccination team may advise you to wait until you are better.

Will the vaccine protect me completely?

The vaccine has been shown to reduce the chance of you suffering from RSV disease. As with all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective and some people may still get RSV despite having a vaccination. If you do get RSV, it should be less severe.

How long will I be protected for?

In the clinical studies, RSV vaccine provided good protection for at least 2 years, and is expected to last longer.

Will I get any side effects?

You may get some soreness, redness or swelling at the site of the injection for a day or two after the vaccination.

Over 12 million doses have been given to older adults in the USA and the UK. A rare but serious nervous system condition called Guillain-Barré has been reported in around 1 case in every 40,000 to 100,000 doses given. The same condition also occurs after a number of common infections and some vaccines but overall it is safer for you to have the vaccine than to risk having a potentially serious RSV infection.

Where can I get more information?

Speak to your vaccination team, practice nurse or GP or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/rsv-older-adult

You can read the patient information leaflet for the RSV vaccine called Abrysvo at:

www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/15309/pil



You can report suspected side effects on the Yellow Card website or by

calling the free phone line 0800 731 6789 (9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday) or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard



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