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Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine for Residents in Long-Term Care Homes, Elder Care Lodges, and some Retirement Homes

Attention: Long-Term Care Facilities, Retirement Homes, Infection Control Practitioners, Ontario Health Central, Family Health Team, Nurse Practitioners, Physicians

Date: October 30, 2023

The Ministry of Health is launching a high-risk targeted Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine program for all individuals 60 years and older living in long-term care homes including Elder Care Lodges, and retirement homes that are licensed to provide dementia care services. In retirement homes that are licensed to provide dementia care services, all residents 60 years and older in the home are eligible for RSV vaccine, not just those receiving dementia care services.

Following the initial rollout to these groups, additional settings and groups may be added depending on available vaccine supply.

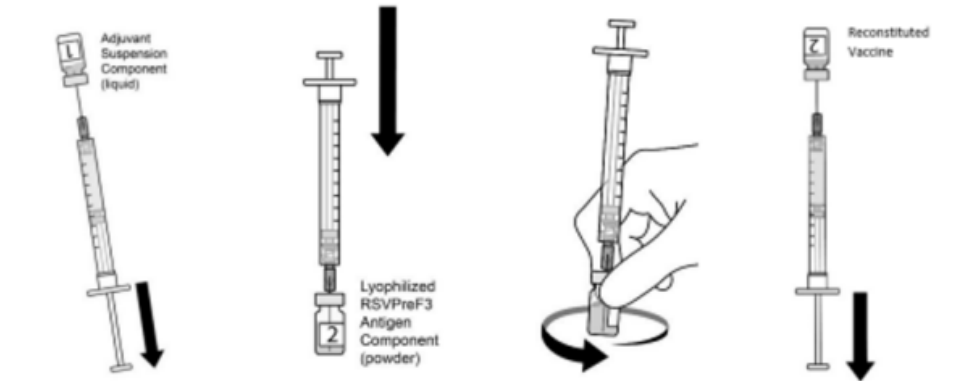
RSV is a major cause of lower respiratory illness, particularly among infants, children, and older adults. Older adults, particularly those with existing comorbidities, are more susceptible to severe disease and have an increased risk of RSV-related hospitalization and mortality. In Ontario, most deaths from RSV have occurred in those aged 60 years and older. Older adults in long-term care and retirement homes also have longer hospital stays than the general population due to RSV.

Key Vaccine Information

- RSV vaccine (Arexvy) is a fridge stable vaccine that must be stored at 2°C - 8°C.
- Arexvy must be reconstituted prior to administration. Arexvy is a suspension for injection supplied as a lyophilized antigen (white powder) that is reconstituted with the accompanying adjuvant suspension.
- A single dose after reconstitution is 0.5 mL, to be administered intramuscularly.
- The need for future doses is unknown at this time.
- Arexvy comes in 10-packs, and we have limited 1-packs. Each 10-pack includes ten vials with the lyophilized (powder) antigen (mustard-coloured cap) and ten vials of the liquid adjuvant (brown vial cap).
- RSV vaccine efficacy was 94.1% against severe RSV-related lower respiratory tract disease and 71.7% against RSV-related acute respiratory infection. Efficacy overall was 82.6% and still retained at 77.3% by the second season (1 year later).
- Like any other vaccine or medication, the RSV vaccine may have some side effects, which in most cases are mild and last only a few days. Common side effects after the RSV vaccine can include pain, redness, and swelling where the needle is given, fatigue, fever, headache, nausea, diarrhea, and muscle or joint pain. Serious neurologic conditions, including Guillain-Barré syndrome, have been reported very rarely after RSV vaccination in clinical trials. It is unclear whether the vaccine caused these events.



Reconstitution Instructions:



Step 1. Cleanse both vial stoppers. Using a sterile needle and sterile syringe, withdraw the entire contents of the vial containing the adjuvant suspension component (liquid) by slightly tilting the vial. Vial 1 of 2 (brown cap vial).

Step 2. Slowly transfer entire contents of syringe into the lyophilized RSVPreF3 Antigen Component (powder). Vial 2 of 2 (mustard-coloured cap vial).

Step 3. Gently swirl the vial until powder is completely dissolved. **Do not shake vigorously.**

Step 4. After reconstitution, using a new needle of suitable gauge and length for intramuscular vaccination, withdraw 0.5 mL of the reconstituted vaccine into the syringe and administer **intramuscularly.**

The reconstituted vaccine should be opalescent (colourless to pale brownish liquid).

*Always inspect for particulate matter and/or variation of appearance (e.g., discolouration) prior to administration. If either of these conditions exists, the vaccine should **not** be administered.

After reconstitution, the vaccine should be used promptly but must be administered within 4 hours (stored between 2°-25°C). If not used within 4 hours, the reconstituted vaccine should be discarded.

Can the RSV vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

As per the [Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee \(OIAC\)](#), routine co-administration with other vaccines is not recommended at this time as a precaution. This is not due to any safety signals but instead to enable proper surveillance of potential vaccine effects. It is recommended to wait 14 days before or after the administration Arexvy and other vaccines.

Who can administer an RSV Vaccine?

Vaccines must be administered by a regulated health professional who is authorized under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 to administer vaccines or by a trained individual under a delegation made in accordance with the requirements set by the regulatory College of the regulated health professional.

Pharmacists currently do not have the scope of practice to administer the RSV vaccine; however, there are initiatives to broaden their scope of practice, which may result in pharmacy administration of the RSV vaccine in the future.

Reporting Adverse Events

An [Adverse Event Following Immunization \(AEFI\) form](#) must be filled out and faxed to the Immunization Program's fax line at **705-726-3962** for follow-up as soon as possible following any unexpected adverse events. See Public Health Ontario's [AEFI Reporting Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Vaccine Ordering Information

To order vaccine please use our [RSV Vaccine Order Form](#). When ordering, be aware of the package size, and only order what you can safely accommodate in your fridge.

Vaccine	Vial Format	10-pack dimensions (WxLxH cm)	1-pack dimensions (WxLxH cm)
Arexvy	Single Dose Vials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 vial of lyophilized antigen powder 1 vial of adjuvant suspension 	7.5x9.0x4.2	13.3x2.5x1.75

Additional Resources

Additional information and resources, including client fact sheet, are available on the [Ministry of Health RSV website](#).

For more information, please visit our website at www.smdhu.org/hpportal or contact the Immunization Program at 705-721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520

- For questions regarding vaccine orders: ext. 8808 or vaccineorders@smdhu.org
- For all other HCP questions: ext. 8806 or hc.vpd@smdhu.org