

Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Colin Lee, Associate Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Lisa Simon, Associate Medical Officer of Health

Expanded Eligibility for Publicly Funded Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine

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

Date: December 18, 2023

The Ministry of Health has announced expanded eligibility for the high-risk targeted Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine program to include all individuals 60 years and older in the following groups:

- Hospital ALC patients
- Dialysis patients
- Transplant recipients (solid organ and HSCT)
- Homeless individuals
- Indigenous individuals

This is in addition to those who were already eligible which included those living in long-term care homes, Elder Care Lodges, and retirement homes that are licensed to provide dementia care services.

The Ministry of Health has been working with Ontario Health, who has indicated support for hospitals to administer the RSV vaccine to Hospital ALC patients, dialysis patients, & transplant recipients (solid organ and HSCT). For transplant patients who are not actively under the care of a hospital program, the health unit will be offering a limited number of RSV vaccination clinics. Those eligible can call Health Connection to book an appointment at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

The health unit will be working with community partners who provide services to homeless populations to facilitate the offer of vaccination to this group.

The health unit will also be working with community partners in each of the four First Nations communities in Simcoe Muskoka, and urban Indigenous groups to support opportunities for vaccination including through Mamaway Wiidokdaadwin Primary Care Team and Chigamik Community Health Centre.

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).

View all Public Health Alert bulletins at the Health Professionals Portal

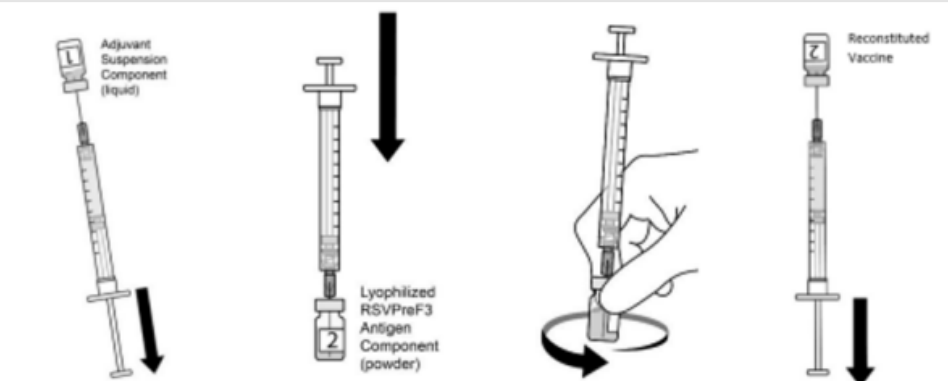
www.smdhu.org/HPPortal



Subscribe to urgent health email communications (E.g. Public Health Alert) by registering at www.smdhu.org/PHAlert

- 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:



The diagram illustrates the four steps of reconstitution. Step 1 shows a syringe being used to draw liquid from a vial labeled '1' (Adjuvant Suspension Component). Step 2 shows the syringe being inserted into a vial labeled '2' (Lyophilized RSVPreF3 Antigen Component) to draw powder. Step 3 shows a hand swirling the syringe to dissolve the powder. Step 4 shows the final 'Reconstituted Vaccine' being drawn into the syringe.

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 RSVPreFe antigen component vial (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.

Co-administration of Arexvy with COVID-19 and/or influenza vaccines, or a shortened interval of less than 14 days should be considered in situations where, in the health care provider’s best judgement, the benefits outweigh the risks, including:

- There is an outbreak of RSV, COVID-19, Influenza within the facility or other facilities in the same geographic region
- If community activity of COVID-19, influenza and/or RSV is high and increasing
- There is a risk that the individual otherwise will not receive the recommended vaccine doses

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.

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)
<u>Arexvy</u>	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