

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: September 24, 2024

RE: Expansion of RSV Immunization Programs for the 2024-25 Season and Upcoming CME – Fall Vaccination Campaign

QUICK FACTS

- This Fall, Ontario has two RSV prevention programs, both with expanded eligibility:
 - **High-risk older adult RSV vaccine program:** In addition to last year's eligibility seniors, this program has expanded to include residents of all retirement homes in 2024–25 (see below for complete eligibility list).
 - **Infant and high-risk children RSV prevention program:** This program has expanded to include all infants born in 2024, who are less than 12 months of age and children under 24 months of age with high-risk medical conditions. The expansion includes a switch to a new monoclonal antibody, Beyfortus (nirsevimab), which is the preferred product for protecting infants from RSV and will be available in the Fall.
- To learn more about the RSV prevention programs and more, register now for Public Health's Mainpro+ accredited webinar on **Wednesday, September 25 from 7-8 p.m.**, [Changes to RSV, COVID-19, Influenza & Pneumococcal vaccines](#). Any interested healthcare professional is welcome to register. Registration flyer is attached.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

High-risk older adult RSV vaccine program

- The RSV vaccines available for the 2024-25 season are Arexvy (GSK) and Abrysvo (Pfizer).
- The [publicly-funded High-Risk Older Adult program](#) includes individuals who are aged 60 years and older and are also:
 - residents of long-term care homes, Elder Care Lodges, or retirement homes
 - patients in hospital receiving alternate level of care (ALC) including similar settings (for example, complex continuing care, hospital transitional programs)
 - patients receiving hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis
 - recipients of solid organ or hematopoietic stem cell transplants
 - individuals experiencing homelessness
 - individuals who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis
- Eligible older adults will be able to receive a single publicly funded dose of either Arexvy or Abrysvo if they have not previously received a dose.

- Re-immunization is not required for individuals who were vaccinated last year; studies indicate that the RSV vaccine offers multi-year protection.
- Long Term Care and Retirement Home residents should receive an RSV vaccine through their residences. Eligible dialysis and transplant recipients should receive an RSV vaccine through the dialysis/transplant unit. Other eligible people may receive an RSV vaccine through their primary care provider.
- Facilities and community health care providers can order RSV immunizing products for individuals who are eligible for a publicly-funded dose. See Ordering and Distribution below for more information.
- Individuals 60 years of age and older who do not qualify for a publicly funded dose of the RSV vaccine can purchase the vaccine with a prescription through their local pharmacy. Publicly-funded RSV vaccine is not available in pharmacy.

Infant and high-risk children RSV prevention program

- The preferred product for Ontario's [infant RSV prevention program](#) is the monoclonal antibody, **Beyfortus (nirsevimab)**.
- [National Advisory Committee \(NACI\)](#) preferentially recommends Beyfortus based on its efficacy, duration of protection and safety profile.
- For the 2024-25 RSV season, Beyfortus is publicly-funded for children who are residents of Ontario and meet any of the following criteria:
 - born in 2024 prior to the RSV season and are less than 12 months of age
 - NACI specifically recommends that infants 8 months of age or less be immunized
 - born during the 2024–25 RSV season
 - high-risk children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable from severe RSV disease through their second RSV season, with:
 - chronic lung disease of prematurity (CLD), including bronchopulmonary dysplasia/chronic lung disease
 - hemodynamically significant congenital heart disease (CHD)
 - severe immunodeficiency
 - Down Syndrome/Trisomy 21
 - cystic fibrosis with respiratory involvement and/or growth delay
 - neuromuscular disease
 - severe congenital airway anomalies impairing the clearing of respiratory secretions
- Beyfortus provides immediate protection and is most efficacious for the six months after administration. It should be given shortly after birth for infants born during the RSV season and just prior to the RSV season for eligible infants and children born before the season begins.
- The specific start and end dates for the 2024–25 RSV season are based on provincial epidemiology and will be communicated by the province and are usually from November to April.
- Details about Beyfortus ordering and distribution will be shared in mid to late October, when this product is anticipated to be available.
- **Abrysvo RSV vaccine** is also available to pregnant individuals, who will deliver near the start of or during the RSV season, for protection of the infant.

- As Beyfortus is the preferred product for infant RSV protection, Abrysvo during pregnancy may be considered for pregnant individuals, where Beyfortus would not be agreed to or available (e.g., not giving birth in Ontario).
- If used, Abrysvo should be given between 32 and 36 weeks gestation.
- Using both the vaccine and monoclonal antibody is not necessary, unless the infant is high-risk (e.g., monoclonal antibody is recommended for all infants with certain medical conditions) or born within 14 days of vaccine administration.
- NB: Arexvy is **not** authorized for use in pregnancy.
- Additional resources to support the infant RSV prevention program are posted on the [Ministry of Health's website](#) and can be used to counsel patients.

Ordering and Distribution

- Currently, facilities can order Abrysvo or Arexvy for individuals who are eligible for a publicly-funded dose by emailing pharmacistsupportteam@halton.ca. The following information must be included:
 - Facility Name and Holding Point Code
 - Temperature logs for the last 30 days
 - Product required (i.e. Arexvy or Abrysvo) and the publicly program it is required for (i.e. High Risk Older Adult Vaccination Program or Infant RSV Prevention Program)
 - Number of doses required
- Starting September 26, RSV orders must be placed by faxing a completed RSV Products Order Form to 905-465-3403. The form will be posted to [Halton's physicians webpage once this new ordering process is in place](#). Public Health is shifting to a fax-based order from , in order to manage the increased number of RSV products when Beyfortus is available.
- Products will be sent to your facility according to Halton Region's vaccine distribution schedule.
- Beyfortus is not currently available. Details about Beyfortus ordering and distribution will be shared on [Halton's physicians webpage](#) in mid to late October, which is when this product is anticipated to be available.
- Health care providers can start ordering Abrysvo for administration to pregnant individuals, if required. Previous orders for Abrysvo were not filled and must be re-submitted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Arexvy [product monograph](#)
- Abrysvo [product monograph](#)
- BEYFORTUS™ (nirsevimab) monoclonal antibody [product monograph](#)
- Ministry of Health [RSV website](#)
- [RSV vaccines chapter of the Canadian Immunization Guide \(CIG\)](#)
- NACI [Statement on the prevention of respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) disease in infants](#)
- NACI [Statement on the prevention of respiratory syncytial virus disease in older adults](#)
- [Changes to RSV, COVID-19, Influenza & Pneumococcal vaccines webinar registration page](#), Halton Region Public Health

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.

Public Health Updates for Halton Physicians: Focus on 2024-25 Fall vaccines Changes to RSV, COVID-19, Influenza & Pneumococcal vaccines

Seasonal respiratory pathogens and COVID-19 continue to have changing patterns. Fortunately, there are new immunizations and publicly-funded programs to help protect your patients. Join Halton Region Public Health to learn about RSV prevention programs for infants and older adults and vaccines to protect against COVID-19, Influenza, and Pneumococcal disease.

Date: Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Time: 7-8p.m.

Register: Online ([registration form](#))



Learning objectives:

Overall series learning objective:

By attending the Public Health Updates for Halton Physicians series, participants will be able to identify and discuss relevant and recent information about approaches to the prevention, diagnosis and management of key public health issues impacting their family medicine practice in both rural and urban settings.

Learning objectives for this session:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe updates to Ontario's RSV Prevention programs for infants and older adults.
- Understand the changes to the COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines for the fall 2024-25 campaign.
- Communicate immunization eligibility and recommendations for RSV, COVID-19, Influenza, and Pneumococcal.
- Understand the effectiveness of immunizations offered as part of Ontario's fall vaccine program.

Submit your questions in advance through the registration form.

Keynote Speaker:



Dr. Joanna Oda, MD, MHSc, FRCPC

Associate Medical Officer of Health,
Halton Region Public Health