Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

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Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunisation for older adults in Western Australia (WA)

Arexvy vaccine fact sheet for immunisation providers

About RSV

In adults, the risk of severe respiratory syncytial (sin-SISH-uhl) virus (RSV) illness is highest in people aged 75 years and over, Aboriginal adults and people with certain medical conditions.

Symptoms of RSV infection are often mild, however, RSV is a more frequent cause of wheezing, earache and sinus pain compared to other respiratory viruses. People with RSV can get worse quickly and develop bronchiolitis and pneumonia.

Eligibility of older adults for government-funded RSV vaccine

Many older adults are eligible to receive a free RSV vaccine in WA through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) or the WA RSV Vulnerable Older Adult (VOA) Vaccination Program. For up to date eligibility, please see please see RSV immunisation.

Who should not receive Arexvy

Arexvy is only registered for use in adults aged ≥60 years and adults 50 to less than 60 years who are at increased risk for RSV disease. Pregnant women and children should not be given Arexvy.

Effectiveness of Arexvy vaccine

In a large clinical trial, adults aged ≥60 years who received Arexvy were 83 per cent less likely to have RSV-associated lower respiratory tract disease and 94 per cent less likely to have severe RSV-associated lower respiratory tract disease during the first RSV season after vaccination.

Administration and co-administration

Arexvy is given as an intramuscular (IM) injection into the deltoid. Arexvy can be co-administered with other routine vaccines, such as pneumococcal, influenza, COVID-19 and zoster. The best time to vaccinate is in May, before the onset of RSV season in most of Western Australia.

Contraindications

The only absolute contraindications to RSV vaccines are:

- anaphylaxis after a previous dose of any RSV vaccine
- anaphylaxis after any component of an RSV vaccine.

Arexvy is not registered for use in pregnant women and should not be given to pregnant women.

Possible side effects

Common side effects that can occur after Arexvy vaccination are:

- pain, redness or swelling at the injection site
- tiredness
- muscle pains
- headache.

These symptoms usually begin soon after vaccination and are mild and short-lived. Severe side effects after Arexvy are uncommon.

Reporting suspected adverse events

WA Health conducts ongoing safety monitoring for all immunisations, including Arexvy, through the WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance System (WAVSS), the central service for reporting significant adverse events following immunisation. If you suspect a serious side effect after immunisation, report it:

- online at SAFEVAC or
- call WAVSS on 6456 0208 (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday).

Training requirements

Training information can be found at Immunisation Education. Completion of the free online RSV education module is mandatory for WA immunisation providers working under the Structured Administration Supply Arrangements (SASA).



Reporting to Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

Under the Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015, it is mandatory for all vaccination providers to report NIP vaccines to the AIR. Reporting state-funded vaccinations to the AIR is a condition of holding a Onelink Australia vaccine order account.

A detailed 'How to Report to the AIR' online guide is available for WA providers.

Vaccine ordering and management

To order government funded vaccines, providers must have a Onelink Australia account and keep their email details up to date to receive WA Health updates on the program and product availability.

Arexvy storage requirements are the same as other NIP vaccines:

- Store at +2°C to +8°C.
- Do not freeze.
- Protect from light.

All WA Immunisation Service Providers and stakeholders responsible for the transport, storage and/or use of government funded vaccines should adhere to the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: Strive for 5 , WA Health Cold Chain Management resources and complete the Cold Chain Management Training Module.

For more information visit Vaccine Ordering.

Additional resources

The WA Department of Health provides updated information regularly. Check the resources below to make sure you have the latest RSV immunisation advice.

- Subscribe to WA Health Vaccine Updates e-newsletter
- RSV immunisation – provider website and resources (WA Health)
- RSV – statutory notification alert (WA Health)
- NCIRS - RSV FAQs
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) immunisation

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IMM-015182 Provider OCT'26