

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities
DATE: August 18, 2023
FROM: Merideth Plumpton, RN, Interim Immunization Program Manager

RSV Vaccine Approved for Adults Aged 60 Years and Older

BACKGROUND

This health advisory provides information from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV) vaccines for older adults.

Generally, RSV season starts in the fall and peaks in the winter, but the timing and severity of RSV season can vary each year. Like other respiratory viruses, the patterns of circulation for RSV in the U.S. have been disrupted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Each year in the U.S.](#), RSV leads to approximately 60,000-160,000 hospitalizations and 6,000-10,000 deaths among adults aged 65 years and older.

Adults who get infected with RSV usually have mild or no symptoms. Symptoms are usually consistent with an upper respiratory tract infection and can include rhinorrhea, pharyngitis, cough, headache, fatigue and fever. Disease usually lasts less than 5 days. However, some adults may have more severe symptoms consistent with a lower respiratory tract infection, such as pneumonia.

Epidemiologic evidence indicates that people aged 60 and older who are at highest risk of severe RSV disease include those with any of the following chronic conditions:

- Lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma)
- Chronic cardiovascular diseases (such as congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Neurologic conditions
- Kidney disorders
- Liver disorders
- Hematologic disorders
- Immune compromise

Other underlying factors that might increase the risk of severe RSV-associated respiratory illness include frailty, advanced age, and residence in a long-term care facility. RSV can lead to exacerbation of conditions such as asthma, COPD and congestive heart failure.

Vaccination

Two new vaccines against RSV will be available in late summer 2023 for **adults aged 60 years and older**. CDC recommends that adults aged 60 and older may receive an RSV vaccine using shared clinical decision-making. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) decided to make the recommendation a shared clinical decision-making recommendation based on concerns of gaps in the clinical trials data. Individuals with compromised immunity were excluded from the clinical trials and only limited numbers of individuals were included in the clinical trials who were frail, of advanced age, or lived in long-term care facilities. Additionally, several ACIP members wanted additional information on safety due to an inconclusive safety signal related to inflammatory neurologic conditions in the clinical trials. RSV vaccination should be targeted to those at highest risk who are most likely to benefit from vaccination until postmarketing surveillance provides additional information on the risk of serious adverse events, such as inflammatory neurologic events and atrial fibrillation. The decision to vaccinate should be based on a discussion between the health care provider and the patient.

RSV vaccine is recommended as a single dose. Studies are ongoing to determine whether (and if so, when) revaccination may be needed.

Vaccine information:

- Arexvy (GSK): Single dose, 0.5 mL IM, must be reconstituted
- Abrysvo (Pfizer): Single dose, 0.5 mL IM, must be reconstituted (prefilled syringe w/ diluent & vial adapter)

While the vaccine can be coadministered with other adult recommended vaccines, including influenza vaccination, during the same visit, there is limited data on immunogenicity and reactogenicity with coadministration, and certainly no data on administration with COVID-19 vaccine. For this reason, many experts are being cautious in this regard. Decisions to coadminister should be based on factors such as likelihood of patient returning for additional vaccines, risk for acquiring vaccine-preventable disease, patient preference, whether the patient is up to date with currently recommended vaccines, and vaccine reactogenicity profiles.

Vermont Adult Vaccine Program (VAVP)

The Vermont Adult Vaccine Program (VAVP) provides routine vaccines at no cost to provider practices for adults ages 19-64 years. Providers enrolled in VAVP will be able to order the new RSV vaccines for their eligible patient population (ages 60 to 64 years). Providers are encouraged to privately purchase a supply for patients aged 65 years and older or to identify nearby pharmacies for referrals.

The Immunization Program will send out a communication when the vaccines have been added to the Vaccine Inventory Management System (VIMS) catalog and are available to order.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

- Be aware of underlying conditions that may increase the risk of severe RSV illness and make vaccination most beneficial.
- If enrolled in the Vermont Adult Vaccine Program, order RSV vaccine as appropriate for patients 60-64 years when added to the VIMS catalog. Please consider privately purchasing vaccine for patients 65 and older.
- Identify patients aged 60 years and older who would benefit from RSV vaccination and offer the vaccine or refer to a pharmacy for vaccination.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus Vaccine Information Statement | CDC](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus: For Healthcare Providers | CDC](#)
- [Use of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Vaccines in Older Adults: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Merideth Plumpton at Merideth.Plumpton@vermont.gov.

To be removed from the HAN or have your information updated please email the Vermont HAN Coordinator at: vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.