



Protect your infant against RSV and whooping cough

Certain viruses and bacteria can make infants seriously ill. The very youngest children are often most vulnerable. Here is some advice to help you protect your infant from airborne respiratory infection.

Meet only healthy people

People who spend time with the infant must be in good health. Avoid spending time with people outside the family who have a cough or a runny nose. It is also important that everyone who takes care of or spends time with the child observes good hand hygiene by regularly washing their hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser.

If possible, avoid exposing your child to crowded indoor environments for extended periods during the autumn and winter. This is when viruses tend to spread in the community.

Breastfeed if possible, as breastfeeding reduces the risk of respiratory infections. Avoid exposing your child to tobacco smoke.

Upper respiratory tract infections in infants are often passed on from older siblings of preschool age. You should therefore encourage them to wash their hands when they come home from preschool.

Protect yourself and your baby against whooping cough

The whooping cough bacterium causes most infections during the late summer and autumn. The disease can cause severe illness in infants, including prolonged bouts of coughing, severe breathing problems and difficulty eating that can lead to children being hospitalised.

Regardless of the time of year, if you are pregnant you are advised to get vaccinated against whooping cough to protect yourself and your child against the disease. Once the child turns three months old, they will be offered the whooping cough vaccine at a Children's Health Centre (BVC).

Protect your infant against RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which most commonly spreads during autumn and winter, can cause breathing

difficulties, fever and loss of appetite in children. As a result, many children need hospital treatment to assist with breathing and feeding.

At present, there is no RSV vaccine for children. There are however two other ways to protect newborn babies: you can get vaccinated during pregnancy, or your child can be immunised with antibodies after birth. This will protect against RSV infection for approximately six months.

During the 2025/26 RSV season, all children born after 10 September 2025 will be offered immunisation using a monoclonal antibody soon after birth.

Vaccinations at Children's Health Centres are voluntary and free of charge

All children are offered vaccinations against a range of diseases at a Children's Health Centre (BVC). All vaccinations included in the national vaccination programme for children are voluntary and free of charge. The first vaccination protects against rotavirus. This is administered as an oral solution when the child is six weeks old.

To keep your child healthy, it is important that you follow the advice below – even if the child has been vaccinated.

Protect your infant (child under 1 year of age) from infection

- Only spend time with people who are healthy.
- Everyone spending time with the child must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser.
- During the autumn and winter, avoid letting the child spend long periods in crowded indoor environments.
- Vaccinate your child with the vaccines offered at the BVC.

Do you have any questions?

You are always welcome to contact your Children's Health Centre (BVC) if you have any questions after your child is born, or your Maternity Care Centre (MVC) while you are pregnant.