

NEWS RELEASE/FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New serum helps protect infants from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, December 13, 2024—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) has joined health care providers across Ontario in offering a new serum that can help prevent Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) infections in infants.

Recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Beyfortus® (Nirsevimab) is an injectable serum—also known as a monoclonal antibody shot—that offers infants immediate protection by supplying the body with ready-made antibodies to create passive immunity. As a result, Beyfortus® is not considered to be a vaccine. Beyfortus® has been reported to provide 5 months of protection, covering the duration of RSV season which occurs typically from November to April.

“With Beyfortus® infants receive passive immunity—meaning they are being given antibodies directly, instead of having them created through an immune response from a vaccine or exposure to illness, known as having active immunity,” said Dr. Erin Pepper, Department Chief, Maternal Child Care, NHH. “Passive immunity against RSV is critical for infants who are still developing their immune systems and will benefit from immediate protection. RSV is a leading cause of hospital admissions for infants. We are optimistic that Beyfortus® will greatly help reduce emergency department visits for this vulnerable age group. At NHH, Beyfortus® is offered to all families after delivery and will be administered prior to discharge based on consent.”

On the recommendation of NACI, Beyfortus® can be offered to any infant entering or born during their first RSV season.

For the current 2024-2025 RSV season, Beyfortus® is publicly funded for infants and children who are residents of Ontario and meet any of the following criteria:

- Born in 2024 prior to the RSV season
- Born during the 2024-2025 RSV season
- Children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable from severe RSV disease through their second RSV season with specific chronic medical conditions

Pregnant adults can choose to have the RSV vaccination ABRYOVO® in their third trimester, in which case Beyfortus® is not necessary for protection of their infant.

NACI recommends Beyfortus® be given to infants over ABRYOVO® in pregnant individuals.

At NHH, infants are eligible to receive Beyfortus® prior to discharge from the hospital. Expecting parents and new families can also speak with their primary care physician (PCP) to learn more about Beyfortus® or contact the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Unit (HKPRDU) at 1-866-888-4577 ext. 1507.

Media contact: Amy Seymour, Communications Officer, Public Affairs, aseymour@nhh.ca or (905) 372-6811 ext. 4009.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 67,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 850 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp), X/Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp), and LinkedIn [Northumberland Hills Hospital](https://www.linkedin.com/company/northumberland-hills-hospital).

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