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

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2026 WA respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunisation program

What older adults need to know about the Arexvy vaccine

About RSV and who is at risk

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

Symptoms of RSV

Symptoms of RSV infection are often mild and like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza. 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.

Preventing RSV

The most effective way to protect yourself from RSV is to get vaccinated.

From 15 May, you are eligible for a free government-funded RSV vaccine (provider consultation fees may apply) if you are aged:

- 75 years and over
- 60 years and over and are Aboriginal
- 60 to 74 and
  - living in a residential aged care home
  - receiving Commonwealth Support at Home*
  - living in specialist disability accommodation (SDA)**
  - in residential mental health services
  - experiencing homelessness
  - in a correctional facility
- 50 to 59 meeting one of the above criteria and
  - are Aboriginal, or
  - have a risk factor for severe RSV disease.

*Excludes persons on Support at Home waitlist and those on Commonwealth Home Support Package (CHSP)

**Excludes persons on SDA waitlist or receiving supported independent living (SIL)

RSV vaccine is given by injection in your upper arm.

Getting Arexvy at the same time as other vaccines

It is safe to get Arexvy at the same time as other vaccines. Ask your immunisation provider about the Arexvy vaccine at your next visit.

If you've had RSV before

Even if you have had RSV before, you can still benefit from getting vaccinated. This is because the immunity from RSV infection does not last very long, and it is common to get RSV even if you have had it before.

Effectiveness

A large clinical trial showed that vaccinated adults aged 60 years and older are significantly less likely to experience severe RSV disease during the first RSV season after vaccination.

Common reactions

In clinical trials, most side effects were mild to moderate and lasted a few days. Common side effects include:

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

Severe side effects after Arexvy are uncommon.

Serious reactions

Serious side effects from immunisation are very rare. However, severe allergic reactions can occur. These reactions usually begin within a few minutes to a few hours after the immunisation and can include:

- hives
- swelling of the face and throat
- difficulty breathing
- a fast heartbeat
- dizziness and weakness.

If you think you are having a serious reaction, tell your immunisation provider immediately while you are still in the clinic. If you are not in the clinic and believe your reaction is serious, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance or go to your closest emergency department.

The WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance System (WAVSS) is WA Health's central service for reporting significant adverse events following immunisation.

If you think a serious side effect occurred after immunisation, please report it online at Reporting side effects after immunisation or by calling WAVVS on 6456 0208 (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday).

More information

- Ask your healthcare provider
- Visit HealthyWA 2026 RSV immunisation program (Link to be added)
- Arexvy Consumer product information
- Questions about vaccination

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