

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Friday, 3 October 2025

FREE IMMUNISATION TO PROTECT BABIES FROM RSV NEXT YEAR

The Allan Labor Government will continue protecting Victorian newborns and infants from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) next winter, following a successful program this year that reduced the rate of RSV cases.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced \$8 million to provide thousands of doses of the long-acting monoclonal antibody, nirsevimab, to protect newborns and eligible infants throughout the RSV season.

The state-based program complements the Commonwealth maternal vaccine, Abrysvo, which was introduced in February as part of the coordinated national effort to build early immunity and protect as many babies as possible.

During the 2025 RSV season, more than 30,000 doses of nirsevimab were distributed to GPs, local councils and hospitals across Victoria, with the joint maternal and infant programs helping to significantly reduce cases among Victorian children and ease pressure on hospitals – falling from 4,731 cases in 2024 to 3,770 in 2025.

The Victorian infant program will again run from April to September 2026, offering free RSV protection for newborns whose mothers did not receive the maternal vaccine dose at least two weeks before giving birth, or those who have additional risk factors for severe RSV disease.

A dedicated catch-up program will also again be available for eligible Victorian infants aged up to two years who remain vulnerable to severe RSV illness.

While RSV is not a new virus, it is highly contagious, with most children contracting the virus by the age of two. It is the leading cause of infant hospitalisation in Australia and can progress to serious illnesses such as pneumonia or bronchiolitis in very young children.

In July the Allan Labor Government also announced an Australian-first program, which will see the Arexvy® RSV vaccine delivered to residents aged 60 and over in public and Aboriginal community-controlled aged care services.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“Every parent wants to protect their child from serious illness – that’s why our free RSV immunisation program is so important, giving families peace of mind and helping to keep our littlest Victorians safe and healthy.”

“We’ll continue to work with the Federal Government to ensure the National Immunisation Program stays up to date and gives Australians access to the latest treatments, including monoclonal antibodies.”

Quote attributable to Chief Health Officer Caroline McElroy

“RSV spreads easily and can cause serious illness in young children - this program is a vital step in protecting those most at risk and keeping more Victorians healthy.”