
MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 2 October 2024

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GPs commend Victorian Government for taking action on RSV

The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) has applauded the Victorian Government's announcement of funding for a free long-acting monoclonal antibody against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for unprotected newborns and eligible infants.

Victorian Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas announced \$18.7 million for infant immunisation will complement an expected Commonwealth-funded maternal vaccine as part of the coordinated national program.

The monoclonal antibody will be available for Victorian babies and infants whose mother was unable to be immunised or was immunised less than two weeks before delivery. The infant immunisation provides protection for about five months, covering the winter peak of RSV infections from April to September.

The RACGP has previously [called on Victoria](#) to fund immunisation against RSV for babies to reduce hospitalisations.

RACGP Victoria Deputy Char Dr Aadhil Aziz said praised the Victorian Government for taking action.

"This is a fantastic initiative from the Victorian Government, and [one GPs have been calling for](#)," he said.

"Going back into hospital with a sick baby is a big fear for new parents. Immunisation is the best way to prevent infants from being hospitalised due to RSV, and to prevent parents having to go through that.

"We're glad the Victorian Government has listened to patients and GPs and taken action.

"RSV among young children is far more serious than many people expect. RSV infections cause over 6000 hospitalisations each year in Australia. [Around half](#) of RSV notifications are of children under five, and infants under six months [are at greatest risk](#).

"It's likely the number one cause of hospitalisation among young children, and up to a quarter of them need intensive care treatment. That's an absolute nightmare for a young family to go through.

"The safety data for monoclonal antibodies for newborns has been [very reassuring](#). Most infants tolerate immunisation very well, and where they have a reaction, it's usually mild and short.

"There are many things new parents have to do, and free immunisation against RSV means one less thing to worry about."

~ENDS

RACGP spokespeople are available for interviews: [03 8699 0992](tel:0386990992) / media@racgp.org.au.

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the peak representative organisation for general practice, the backbone of Australia's health system. We set the standards for general practice, facilitate lifelong learning for GPs, connect the general practice community, and advocate for better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

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