

Script for Nurses when discussing Nirsevimab

Understanding RSV and Nirsevimab

What is RSV?

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common virus that usually circulates from November to March each year. For most people, RSV causes mild, cold-like symptoms and clears up on its own within 5–7 days without the need for medical treatment.

However, RSV can be much more serious in certain individuals—especially **infants under 1 year of age**, and particularly **those under 6 months**. In these babies, RSV can quickly move from the upper to the lower airways, leading to serious illness, difficulty breathing, and the need for medical attention or hospitalization for oxygen support.

What is Nirsevimab?

Nirsevimab is a long-acting **monoclonal antibody** that offers **passive protection** against RSV. Unlike a vaccine, which helps the body learn to make its own antibodies, Nirsevimab delivers **ready-made antibodies** that help fight off the virus if the baby is exposed.

Monoclonal antibodies have been used for many years in healthcare. Previously, there was a short acting monoclonal antibody called palivizumab that was used to prevent RSV infection in premature and high-risk infants (those with cardiac disease or lung disease). Palivizumab was safely used for over 20 years before we switched to Nirsevimab.

Nirsevimab has been well studied since 2016 and has been used commercially since 2023 on millions of babies around the world. While Nirsevimab won't completely prevent infection, it greatly reduces the risk of the baby becoming seriously ill or needing medical care. A single dose offers protection for **up to 6 months**, covering the entire RSV season.

Is Nirsevimab safe?

Yes. Nirsevimab has been widely used in countries like Spain, France, the UK, and the United States, and has shown to be **very well tolerated**. Side effects are rare and mild. Some babies may experience **tenderness or swelling at the injection site**, usually in the leg, but this typically improves within 24 hours.

How is Nirsevimab different from a vaccine?

- **Vaccines** introduce a small, inactive part of a virus so the body can create its own antibodies over time.
- **Nirsevimab** provides immediate, premade antibodies that stay in the baby's system to protect against RSV throughout the season.

What to expect during the injection

We aim to keep your baby as comfortable as possible during the injection. **Skin-to-skin contact** and **feeding** during or after the injection are helpful ways to comfort your baby.