

→ SEVERE BRONCHIOLITIS. PREVENTION AND CARE



WHAT IS BRONCHIOLITIS?

Bronchiolitis is an infection of the bronchioles – the small airways in the lungs. It is caused by a virus, usually the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Bronchiolitis epidemics usually happen between October and March and mostly affect **children under 2 years old**. It usually causes **minor symptoms** but can be more serious in premature babies, children under 6 months old or those with an existing health problem. Hospital treatment may be needed in these cases.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- The first symptoms are similar to a cold, such as a cough and a blocked/runny nose. The child may have a fever.
- After 2 to 4 days, they may develop difficulty breathing. For example, they might breathe more slowly and have trouble eating.
- They may sound wheezy and you might see their ribs very clearly, their chest sink or their belly move with each breath.

IS IT PREVENTABLE?

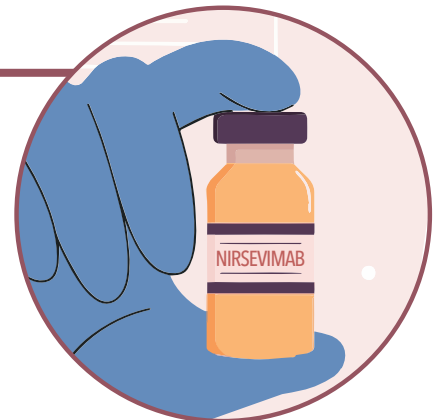
Yes, by washing your hands and preventing babies from coming into contact with anyone that has a cold.

If your child has been diagnosed with severe bronchiolitis, you **should not** take them to **daycare**. The infection is transmitted when people cough or sneeze and through contact with contaminated surfaces. Breastfeeding helps protect babies against these kinds of infection.

Nirsevimab immunisation will be rolled out in the 2023-24 season. It provides **immediate protection**, and the current data show that it prevents hospitalisation in more than 80% of cases.

The immunisation program targets babies born between 1 July 2023 and 31 March 2024, as well as children under 24 months at the time of immunisation who are at high risk of severe infection (those born from 7 November 2021 onwards).

Nirsevimab is injected into a muscle (intramuscular injection). It may cause side effects similar to those caused by other vaccines. The most common are rash, fever and pain at the injection site. Nirsevimab is not recommended for people who are hypersensitive to the active ingredient or any of the inactive ingredients, or if they had a severe reaction to a previous dose.



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HOW IS IT TREATED?

There is currently no medication for treating bronchiolitis. It is important to **avoid** all contact with **cigarette smoke** because it can make the symptoms worse.

Most cases **get better** on their own **within 2 weeks**, but there may be a persistent cough.



GENERAL MEASURES

It is usually not serious and can be treated by following some basic steps:



- Irrigating the nose to keep it clear.



- Feeding little and often to keep the child nourished and hydrated.



- Lying the child in a semi-upright position to make it easier to breathe.



- Using medicine to reduce fever (antipyretics).

INFORMATION



- If you are concerned, or if your baby is only a few months old, has a chronic condition or was premature, contact your paediatrician immediately.



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