

Vaccination FAQ: Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) For Adults with Kidney Diseases



What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common virus that causes infections of the upper and lower respiratory airways. Traditionally the leading cause of acute lower respiratory infection and associated hospitalizations in infants and children globally, RSV also affects adults. Although RSV in adults is generally mild, older adults and those with certain conditions, such as kidney disease, are at higher risk for developing severe disease.

What are signs and symptoms of RSV?

RSV is transmitted via droplets from the nose and throat of infected persons. Mild symptoms include runny nose, sore throat, headache, fatigue, and fever. Severe symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, and wheezing. The average incubation period from infection to symptoms is 4-6 days.

Can there be complications from the RSV virus?

Yes. RSV respiratory infections can lead to long-term respiratory consequences including hospitalization, persistent respiratory symptoms (e.g. wheezing and coughing), and complications like bronchitis and pneumonia. Severe RSV disease can be fatal.

Are there certain adults more at risk for severe complications?

In general, the risk of severe RSV illness rises with increased age. At risk are:

- Adults over 75
- Adults with chronic diseases, including heart, lung, or **kidney diseases**, especially those dependent on kidney replacement therapy (dialysis or transplant)
- Adults living in nursing homes

What is the best protection against RSV?

Immunization is the best protection for people who are at increased risk for severe RSV. A one-time RSV vaccination is recommended for all adults ages 75 and older and for adults age 50-74 at risk for severe RSV, including people with **kidney diseases** and those dependent on kidney replacement therapy.

What are the recommendations for people being considered for a kidney transplant?

The RSV vaccine is strongly recommended for people being considered for a kidney transplant.

Can post-transplant patients receive an RSV vaccination?

The one-time RSV vaccine is safe and recommended for patients who have received a transplant.

What if a patient is noted to have signs/symptoms of RSV while receiving dialysis in the outpatient facility?

If a patient has signs and symptoms of RSV in a dialysis facility, place a mask on the patient and ensure the health care staff institute contact precautions. Advise the patient to seek medical care and consider testing.

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/respiratory-syncytial-virus#tab=tab_1

<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/vaccines/index.html>

