

**Ministry of Health**
**Ministère de la Santé**

OHIP, Pharmaceuticals and  
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Dear Health Care Provider:

**RE: Revised start date of 2021-2022 Season for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)  
Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infants Program – October 12, 2021**

The Ministry of Health has been monitoring the current RSV hospital admission rates and RSV positivity throughout Ontario as the traditional RSV season approaches. The ministry has also consulted the RSV Advisory Group. Based on current data projections and the early onset of the RSV season in some regions of the province, the 2021-2011 season will officially start on **October 12, 2021**.

Traditionally the RSV season has been considered ongoing when there are two or more local RSV related hospitalizations per week for two consecutive weeks. The current trends for this season appear to suggest a quicker rise in cases than in previous seasons. Therefore, the ministry has made the decision to allow the season to start earlier in all regions of Ontario, even in the absence of two local RSV related hospitalizations per week for two consecutive weeks.

Please note that the RSV season end date remains April 1, 2022. The ministry and its expert Advisory Group will continue to monitor the data throughout the season and will announce any changes to the season end date based on the best available data as it becomes available.

While the official start date of the RSV season has been changed to October 12, 2021, RSV clinics are not required to start administering palivizumab as of that date. Each clinic and RSV site should weigh the logistical and administrative requirements necessary to begin the season earlier in combination with the current trends and RSV activity in their region.

There will be no change to the criteria for RSV eligibility due to the change in season start date. The RSV criteria remain the same as in previous seasons and age-related criteria will be calculated as if the season began on November 1, 2021. As a reminder, the definition of ≤ 6 months as stated in the RSV criteria means an eligible infant born on May 1, 2021 or thereafter would be considered less than or equal to 6 months of age for that season.

The ministry's expert Advisory Group is recommending that the general dosing schedule remain the same as in previous years. The dosing schedule is as follows:

- Dose number one to be given at week 0
- Dose number two to be given 21 days after the first dose
- Further doses to be given in 28-day intervals

The maximum number of doses allowed this season will be set to a maximum of 6 doses.

Any clinic or RSV site ordering palivizumab will need to submit new orders if they plan to change the dates of administration at their respective sites. Sites may wish to place new orders or confirm existing orders to ensure they receive supply in time for any appointments they may have booked. As a reminder, palivizumab can only be administered to an infant who has been approved for funding. Clinics and RSV sites should refrain from booking appointments and administering palivizumab until they have confirmed an eligible infant has been approved for funding.

I trust that this information will be helpful in delivering this Program efficiently and effectively through the RSV season.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

David Schachow  
Director, Delivery and Eligibility Review Branch