

Health Programs and Delivery Division

Division des programmes de santé et de la prestation des services

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2023-10-17

Dear Health Care Provider:

**RE: Revised start date of 2023-2024 Season for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infants Program**

The Ministry of Health has been monitoring RSV hospital admission rates and RSV positivity throughout Ontario as the traditional RSV season approaches. Based on current data projections, an early onset of the RSV season is anticipated in some regions of the province.

Following consultation with the RSV Advisory Group, I am writing to inform you that the 2023-2024 RSV season for the **Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infants Program** will officially start on **October 30, 2023**.

The RSV season has been considered ongoing when there are two or more local RSV-related hospitalizations of infants per week for two consecutive weeks. The current trends for this season appear to suggest a mix of active and non-active regions throughout the province. Therefore, the ministry has made the decision to allow the season to start earlier in all regions of Ontario.

While the official start date of the RSV season has been changed to October 30, 2023, 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 on the specified date in combination with the current trends and RSV activity in their region.

There will be no change to the criteria for high-risk infant RSV prophylaxis eligibility due to the change in season start date. The current RSV criteria for this season can be found on the ministry's [RSV website](#). Note that age-related criteria will be calculated as if the season began on November 1, 2023. As a reminder, the definition of  $\leq 6$  months as stated in the RSV criteria implies that an eligible infant born on May 1, 2023, or thereafter would be considered less than or equal to 6 months of age for that season.

Please note that the Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infant Program RSV season end date remains April 1, 2024. 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 data as it becomes available.

The maximum number of doses allowed this season will be 5 doses. Additional doses can only be administered following approval by the Ministry of Health.

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