



## **NWT Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Prophylaxis Program**

### **2023/2024 Season**

RSV causes lower respiratory tract infections in all ages in all areas of the world. Those with highest risk of hospitalization or even death include premature infants, infants with chronic lung diseases, or infants with unstable or significant heart disease.

Risk factors such as smoking in the home, not being breastfed, history of wheezing in family members, attending daycare, and crowded living conditions increase the risk of severe illness to the young premature, high-risk infant.

### **RSV Prophylaxis (SYNAGIS®)**

Palivizumab (SYNAGIS®) is a humanized monoclonal antibody that is given to infants for the prevention of serious lower respiratory disease caused by RSV. It has been shown to reduce hospitalization due to RSV infection in young high risk children who meet the criteria.

SYNAGIS® is given as a monthly (every 28 days) intramuscular injection at a dose of 15 mg/kg during the RSV season. It is given as part of the infant's routine immunization schedule and there is no need to delay or modify routine vaccines, including live vaccines, when SYNAGIS® prophylaxis is used.

Once a child has been approved to receive SYNAGIS® by the territorial paediatrician/RSV program coordinator, SYNAGIS® can be obtained through special order from your regional pharmacy (Stanton Territorial Hospital or Inuvik Regional Hospital).

### **NWT RSV Program Coordinator**

Program coordination is done by Public Health. For the 2023/2024 program year the coordinator will be:

Melanie Kearley, RN  
Territorial Specialist Public Health  
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## **Eligibility**

To be eligible to receive SYNAGIS® the infant must be an NWT resident and approved by the territorial paediatrician/NWT RSV coordinator. The NWT criteria are based on guidelines from the Canadian Pediatric Society and the Northern Alberta RSV Program.

The NWT eligibility criteria to receive SYNAGIS, is as follows:

**Children who are premature less than or equal to 32 6/7 weeks gestational age**, born after May 31, 2023, and who are less than 6 months of age as of December 1, 2023.

**Children who are premature 33 0/7 to 35 6/7 weeks gestational age**, born after September 30, 2023. These children may be eligible for SYNAGIS based on the criteria found in the attached NWT RSV Prophylaxis Risk Assessment and order form 2023/2024. **The risk factor section must be completed (outlined in red on the form).** A score equal to or greater than 55 will be used by the paediatrician/RSV coordinator when determining if RSV prophylaxis is approved for this child. This and other factors including any other health conditions and medications are taken into consideration when determining the child's eligibility, so please be as detailed as possible on the form.

**Children who are identified at risk from sections 3 to 9** on the NWT RSV Prophylaxis Risk Assessment **may** also be eligible for SYNAGIS®.

The first dose of SYNAGIS® is usually administered by the Northern Alberta RSV program prior to the child's discharge back to the NWT.

## **Procedure for starting a child on SYNAGIS®**

See the [NWT RSV PROGRAM FLOW CHART](#). Once the child has been approved, any practicing NWT Registered Nurse who is competent as per the clinical practice information notice: [#152: NWT Mandatory Education Program on Immunization Competency](#) can administer SYNAGIS®.

## **References**

1. Alberta Health Services RSV Prevention Program; Criteria for the use of Palivizumab 2023-2024: [Palivizumab \(Synagis\) Alberta RSV Prevention Program](#)
2. [SYNAGIS® Product Monograph](#)
3. [NWT 2023/2024 Risk Assessment and Standing Order Form](#)
4. [NWT 2021/2022 Procedure for starting a child on SYNAGIS® flow chart](#)
5. [NWT Clinical Practice Information Notice \(CPI #152\).](#)