

Plain English Summary

Palivizumab for preventing serious lower respiratory tract disease caused by respiratory syncytial virus

What does the guidance say?

Palivizumab is not recommended for government funding for preventing serious lower respiratory tract disease caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in children.

What is respiratory syncytial virus?

Lower respiratory tract disease occurs when there is infection in the lungs or the airways.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of lower respiratory tract disease in children under two years old. It is spread in a similar way as the common cold, through contact with tiny droplets from sneezing or coughing and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus. It usually causes mild symptoms, but it can cause serious disease when it infects the lungs (pneumonia), large airways (bronchitis) or small airways (bronchiolitis). Symptoms of serious lower respiratory tract disease can include coughing, wheezing, decreased appetite, irritability, shortness of breath and fever.

Young children who are born prematurely, who have certain lung or heart diseases, or have weak immunity are at higher risk of serious infection from RSV.

What is palivizumab?

Palivizumab belongs to a group of medicines called monoclonal antibodies. It attaches to a protein called “F protein” on the surface of RSV and helps the body’s immune system slow or stop the spread of the virus and protects the body against serious infection. It is given as an injection into the muscle.

Why was palivizumab not recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Palivizumab was not recommended for funding because its benefits in preventing serious lower respiratory tract disease and hospitalisation caused by RSV in high-risk children do not justify its cost. If a doctor recommends that your child needs palivizumab to prevent serious lower respiratory tract disease, you can speak to a medical social worker to find out if there is other financial assistance available to help with the cost of palivizumab.

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Is palivizumab suitable for my child?


Your child's doctor may recommend that they have palivizumab to prevent lower respiratory tract disease. They should give you clear information, listen to your views and concerns, and talk to you about the options that are suitable for your child.

Some of the questions you may want to ask your child's doctor when making decisions about the care plan for your child are:

- What are the side effects and risks of the medicine, and how likely are they?
- How much does the medicine cost?
- How long will my child need to be on the medicine for?
- What happens if I do not want my child to have the medicine?

Published: 8 February 2023

 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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