

**Regarding immunization to prevent infection with the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
in the State of Kuwait**

Minister of Health:

After reviewing the provisions of the Civil Service Decree-Law and System and their amendments.

- And the provisions of Law No. (8) of 1969 regarding health precautions to prevent communicable diseases and its amendments, and the ministerial decisions issued in implementation thereof.
- And Ministerial Resolution No. (75) of 2008 regarding the procedures and dates for vaccinating children.
- And the provisions of Law No. (28) of 1996 regarding the regulation and circulation of medicines in the State of Kuwait.
- And Ministerial Resolution No. (83) of 2024 regarding amending the basic vaccination schedule for childhood in the State of Kuwait
- And based on the recommendations of the National Committee for the General Immunization Plan in its meeting No. 2024/5 dated 12/24/2024
- In the interest of public welfare and based on the presentation made by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health.

Firstly: Immunization against the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

and immunization with monoclonal antibodies shall be included in the schedule of optional preventive vaccinations at the Ministry of Health, as follows:

First: Vaccination against the respiratory syncytial virus using the (RSV vaccine):

1. Non-immune groups targeted for vaccination:

- Pregnant women between the 32nd and 36th weeks of pregnancy, using the vaccine licensed for use during pregnancy.
- Individuals aged 75 years and older.
- The age group from 50 to 74 years with the following chronic diseases:
 - Chronic heart disease (such as heart failure or coronary artery disease)
 - Chronic lung diseases such as severe asthma, chronic bronchitis, and bronchiectasis.
 - Chronic renal failure, especially in advanced stages.

- Chronic liver diseases (such as cirrhosis)
- Chronic blood diseases (such as thalassemia, sickle cell anemia).
- Diabetes mellitus (both types)
- Severe obesity (body mass index - (40)
- Neurological or muscular disorders affecting breathing (such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or cerebral palsy).
- Moderate or severe immune weakness or deficiency (such as cancer patients, organ transplant patients, or those infected with HIV).
- Individuals residing in long-term care homes.
- Or any other chronic or immune diseases that require vaccination.

Vaccination Mechanism:

- Vaccination intervals and the seasonal periods of disease prevalence are determined by the National Committee for the General Immunization Plan, based on national surveillance data.
- Pregnant women receive vaccinations at maternity clinics in primary healthcare centers and pregnancy follow-up clinics in government hospitals, with a single dose, in coordination with preventive health centers.
- Adults in specified categories are vaccinated at preventive health centers based on referrals from their treating physicians, with a single dose.
- Private hospitals with obstetrics and gynecology departments may obtain the vaccine designated for pregnant women from the Ministry of Health

Monoclonal antibodies

Second: Immunization against respiratory syncytial virus using monoclonal antibodies

Target groups for immunization

- Newborns and infants (less than 8 months old)
Those born during the seasonal period, or those born outside the seasonal and entering their first RSV season, are given the antibody drug in one of the following cases:
 - If the mother did not receive the RSV vaccine during pregnancy.
 - If the mother's vaccination status is unknown.
 - If the child was born less than 14 days after the mother received the RSV vaccine.

- Children (8 months - less than 24 months) who have risk factors are immunized during the seasonal, if they have one of the risk factors determined by the treating physician.
- Monoclonal antibodies should not be used for children 24 months of age and older.

Immunization Mechanism

- seasonal period of disease prevalence are determined based on what is decided by the National Committee for the General Immunization Plan, according to national surveillance data
- Newborns are given the antibody dose within the first 24 hours of birth, in postnatal wards or in hospital neonatal intensive care units during seasonal
- Infants born within the six months preceding the seasonal period are given a catch-up dose of antibodies at the beginning of the season. This dose is combined with the scheduled periodic vaccinations in the second, fourth, or sixth month, and is administered at preventive health centers.
- Children with chronic diseases under the age of two are immunized based on referrals from hospital physicians, at hospital preventive health departments during seasonal disease outbreaks.
- Private hospitals that include maternity wards may obtain the antibody drug from the Ministry of Health to immunize newborns within 24 hours of birth. This drug is administered free of charge, and the relevant private hospital is obligated to explicitly state that the drug is free of charge on its invoice.

The relevant authorities are charged with implementing this decision with the following tasks and responsibilities:

1- The National Committee for the General Immunization Plan

- Determine vaccination intervals and seasonal periods of disease spread, based on national surveillance data.
- Review scientific evidence and update recommendations in line with global and regional medical developments.

2. Public Health Administration

- Prepare and circulate technical guidelines for the use of vaccines and antibody drugs mentioned in the above articles to all workers at immunization sites involved in implementing this decision, in coordination with the National Committee for the General Immunization Plan.

- Develop a media plan to raise awareness of the importance of immunization against the disease, in coordination with the Ministry's media outlets.
- Prepare a list of immunization sites in hospitals, specialized centers, and primary healthcare centers, circulate it, and train workers at those sites on how to apply the technical guidelines in the correct practical manner
- Coordinate with the Medical Warehouses Department to provide the preventive health departments with the vaccines and antibody drugs mentioned in the decision.
- Coordinate with the Information Systems Department to enter the vaccines and antibody drugs mentioned in the decision into the digital health systems and the electronic vaccination system, according to the instructions contained in this decision.

3- Medical Warehouses Department

- Provide the required needs and quantities of vaccines and antibody drugs to implement this decision, in coordination with the Public Health Department.
- Provide the required financial allocations in coordination with the public health sector and the financial sector.

4- Directors of hospitals, specialized centers, and primary healthcare centers, heads of departments of public health, and heads of medical and technical departments

- Cooperate and coordinate regarding guiding and transferring patients from the targeted groups to vaccination sites.
- . Facilitating the work of preventive health physicians in identifying and immunizing target groups.
- Heads of public health departments must determine their needs for the quantities of vaccines and antibodies mentioned in this decision, and submit them to the Public Health Department to work on providing them in coordination with the Medicines and Medical Equipment Sector.

5- Information Systems Department:

The Information Systems Department is responsible for activating the electronic vaccination system in the entities that will work

- to implement this decision in coordination with the Public Health Department:
- Maternity clinics in health centers.
- Pregnancy review clinics in government and private sector hospitals.
- Maternity wards in government and private sector hospitals.
- Premature baby wards in government and private sector hospitals.
- Pediatric wards in government and private sector hospitals.

Third : The respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine and monoclonal antibodies are provided free of charge to the target groups

Fourth :This decision shall be communicated to those concerned for implementation. It shall be effective from its date, and any decision or text that conflicts with its provisions shall be repealed.

Minister of Health

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