



Coverage Guidelines: Synagis (palivizumab)

Policy

Network Health covers Synagis (palivizumab) for *Network Health Together*[®] and *Network Health Extend* members based on the 2009 American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Disease recommendations for the prevention of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in infants, a change from the 2002 recommendations on the use of Synagis.

Synagis is only available through our specialty pharmacy program as a pharmacy benefit. Network Health will not reimburse medical claims for the cost of Synagis in outpatient settings, but will reimburse providers for the administration of the drug.

Covered conditions

Network Health will approve up to five monthly doses of Synagis when an infant or child meets the criteria for one of the following conditions:

Chronic lung disease (CLD)

- Is under 24 months of age at the start of RSV season, **and**
- Has received medical treatments such as bronchodilators, diuretics, or corticosteroids within six months prior to RSV season

Congenital abnormalities of the airway or neuromuscular disease

- Is born at or less than 34 weeks, 6 days gestation; is under 12 months of age at the start of RSV season, **and**
- Has compromised handling of respiratory secretions

Congenital heart disease (CHD)

- Is under 24 months of age at the start of RSV season, has hemodynamically significant acyanotic or cyanotic CHD, **and**
- Is currently receiving medication to control congestive heart failure or has moderate to severe pulmonary hypertension secondary to CHD

Immunodeficiency

- Is under 24 months of age at the start of RSV season, **and**
- Has severe immunodeficiency, such as severe combined immunodeficiency or severe acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

Prematurity

- Is born at or less than 28 weeks, 6 days gestation and is under 12 months of age at the start of RSV season, **or**
- Is born between 29 weeks, 0 days and 31 weeks, 6 days gestation and is under six months of age at the start of RSV season, **or**

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- Is born between 32 weeks, 0 days and 34 weeks, 6 days gestation and is under three months of age at the start of RSV season or born during RSV season with **one** of the following risk factors:
 - Child care attendance, **or**
 - Siblings under five years of age

Please note: Network Health will approve up to three monthly doses of Synagis for these infants (born between 32 weeks, 0 days and 34 weeks, 6 days gestation with one of the listed risk factors) until they reach three months of age or until the end of RSV season (March 31), whichever comes first.

The following table lists the maximum number of Synagis doses Network Health will approve for premature infants:

Maximum number of Synagis doses for premature infants during RSV season				
RSV season	Month of birth	Born at or under 28 weeks, 6 days and under 12 months of age at the start of RSV season	Born at 29 wks, 0 days – 31 weeks, 6 days and under 6 months of age at start of RSV season	Born at 32 weeks, 0 days – 34 weeks, 6 days, and under 3 months of age at the start of RSV season or born during RSV season with one risk factor
Previous	November 1 – March 31	5	0	0
	April	5	0	0
	May	5	5	0
	June	5	5	0
	July	5	5	0
	August	5	5	1
	September	5	5	2
	October	5	5	3
Current	November	5	5	3
	December	4	4	3
	January	3	3	3
	February	2	2	2
	March	1	1	1

Definitions

Acyanotic refers to the absence of bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes, due to deficient blood oxygenation. Acyanoic is typically used in reference to types of congenital heart defects that do not prevent the lungs from properly oxygenating blood.

Bronchodilators are medications that dilate the airways of the lungs to help improve breathing.

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Child care attendance is when infants or toddlers get care and supervision at a home or facility (for the purpose of this policy).

Chronic lung disease, also known as bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), is a chronic lung condition that affects newborn babies put on a breathing machine after birth or born prematurely.

Congenital abnormality is a defect present at birth.

Congenital heart disease (CHD) is a defect in the structure of the heart present at birth.

Corticosteroids are medications that reduce swelling and inflammation in the body.

Cyanotic is a bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes due to insufficient oxygen in the blood. Cyanotic is typically used in reference to types of congenital heart defects that prevent the lungs from properly oxygenating blood.

Diuretics are medications that remove excessive fluid from the body.

Hemodynamically significant describes CHD that affects blood circulation to the rest of the body.

Neuromuscular disease affects muscle-controlling nerves and can affect lung and heart function.

Prematurity is when an infant is born at or less than 34 weeks, 6 days gestation (for the purpose of this policy).

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common and contagious virus that attacks the eyes, nose, and throat (similar to a bad cold).

RSV season lasts from November 1 through March 31 (for the purpose of this policy).

Guidelines reference

AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics). Respiratory Syncytial Virus. In: Pickering LK, ed. RED BOOK: 2009 (28th Edition). Report of the Committee on Infectious Disease. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; pp 560-569.

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