Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) case study

"It is wonderful that there is now a vaccine available to help protect babies from RSV. I would encourage any pregnant person to have it. The small sharp scratch of a vaccine is such a tiny price to pay to protect your little bean from becoming seriously unwell."

Mae'r wybodaeth hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This information is available in Welsh.

Vicky's story

"Mali was born two days early in November 2022. Her birth was quick and uncomplicated. Mali was well, but she was quite blocked up with mucus. We were told this can sometimes happen after a fast birth. She had an early bath to help clear some of the mucus, and we were discharged home.

Over the following week, though, Mali continued to struggle. Her breathing was very nasally, and the mucus kept causing her problems. Her breathing gradually got worse. We wondered if it was an ongoing result of a fast birth, but when she was 11 days, she was notably worse.

I was in the bath and Mali was in her basket beside me. We thought the steam might help her feel better, but I noticed that when she breathed, she was sucking in just under her neck.

We called the GP and we were given an urgent appointment straight away. The GP saw us quickly, checked Mali, and we were asked to go immediately to Noah's Ark Children's Hospital. It was at this point I realised something more serious was wrong with her. We were seen very quickly and Mali was admitted for a viral infection.

While in hospital, Mali had a feeding tube inserted through her nose because feeding would tire her out and make it even harder for her to breathe. She would become breathless, fussy and struggle to breastfeed. Thankfully, she never deteriorated enough to require intensive breathing support.

There was one night when her oxygen levels dropped quite suddenly and her breathing became difficult. Thanks to the excellent care from the nurses and doctors, and cuddles from me, her oxygen levels improved and it was decided she did not need further intervention.

Mali spent seven days in hospital. We were lucky that her case was not considered severe, but because she was so tiny, she required close monitoring and support with feeding. The virus took its toll on her. Even after we came home, she remained not quite right for some time. It feels like a dream now, but it took a long time for her to fully recover from the virus.

Without a doubt this was one of the scariest experiences of my life. Mali was so tiny and so vulnerable, and seeing her so poorly was terrifying. I do remember that there were many babies and young children on the ward with RSV at the same time and it put a lot of pressure on the ward and staff.

I have always been pro-vaccination and will take any opportunity to protect myself and my family. The RSV vaccine was not available when I was pregnant with Mali, but if it had been, I would have had it in a heartbeat.

Mali was so small and fragile when she got poorly, and we are incredibly lucky that nothing more serious happened as a result. Today, she is a happy, healthy, vibrant four-year-old, and we are so grateful.

It is wonderful that there is now a vaccine available to help protect babies from RSV. I would encourage any pregnant person to have it. The small sharp scratch of a vaccine is such a tiny price to pay to protect your little bean from becoming seriously unwell."



About the RSV vaccine

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually spreads in autumn and winter. For most people, RSV causes a mild illness, such as a cough or cold. However, babies under one year of age are at risk of becoming very unwell and may need hospital care.

The RSV vaccine can help protect newborns and infants from RSV infection. It is given to pregnant women from 28 weeks of pregnancy. Having the vaccine in pregnancy will give each baby the best protection against severe RSV illness.

For more information about the RSV vaccine, visit phw.nhs.wales/RSV or scan me

Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives

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