

Information about measles

Measles is a serious viral disease that can make people very sick. It spreads very easily among people who have not had measles before or have not been vaccinated against measles.

It can be passed on by breathing, sneezing or coughing near others. You can catch measles just by being in a room someone with measles was in up to an hour before.



Get vaccinated – protect yourself and others against measles

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine provides very strong lifelong protection against measles.

- The MMR vaccine is FREE for everyone under 18 years old, it does not matter what your visa or citizenship status is.
- Tamariki (children) can get their first MMR vaccination at 12 months old, and their second at 15 months old. Getting your child immunised on time is the best way to protect them.
- For people over 18 years old, the MMR vaccine is free if you are a resident or eligible for free healthcare in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- If you have a health condition that has weakened your immune system please speak to your healthcare provider to check if you can be vaccinated. Unfortunately you cannot have the MMR vaccine if you are pregnant. If your whānau get vaccinated you will be less likely to catch measles if you cannot get vaccinated yourself.

You can get the MMR vaccine from your doctor or hauora provider, and people over 3 years old can get vaccinated at some pharmacies. To find an MMR vaccination service near you visit Healthpoint and go to the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine: www.healthpoint.co.nz/immunisation

Measles symptoms



Red, blotchy rash



Fever



Sore, watery pink eyes



Cough



Runny nose

The rash normally appears 3 to 7 days after the other symptoms. It starts on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body.

If you have these symptoms and you are not immune to measles (or are not sure), seek medical help. Contact your doctor or call Healthline for free on 0800 611 116.

If you need to visit a medical centre or hospital call first so you do not risk passing on measles to others. In an emergency call 111.

COVID-19 and measles

Measles and COVID-19 can feel very similar to start with. It's important to test yourself for COVID-19 if you are unwell with cold and flu-like symptoms. If a test result is negative but you still have cold and flu-like symptoms stay home until you feel better.

If you also develop measles-like symptoms follow the advice above. For more information on COVID-19 visit: www.covid19.health.nz/advice

If you catch measles

If you have measles you will need to stay home and isolate until you are no longer infectious. This reduces the risk of you passing on measles to others.

You will be given information by public health staff on how to isolate safely and what you need to do.

It usually takes 7 to 10 days to recover after first getting symptoms. Measles can make you very sick, and sometimes people need hospital care.

People you have been in contact with could be at risk of catching measles too, and will need to quarantine if they are not immune to measles.

Measles close contacts

If you have been near someone with measles you may be identified as a close contact.

Close contacts who are not immune have a higher risk of developing and spreading the virus.

if you are identified as a close contact you will need to stay at home and also:

1. watch out for measles symptoms
2. call ahead if you need health care
3. stay away from people in your household who could get very sick from measles

You will be given more advice on what you need to do by public health staff.

Isolation & quarantine support

If you need help while you are at home ask public health staff when they call you, or contact MSD on 0800 559 009 to see if you are eligible for financial support.

Check if you are protected against measles

You are considered immune to measles (protected) if you:

- were born before 1 Jan 1969
- have had measles before
- have had 2 doses of a measles vaccine (e.g. MMR) after your first birthday
- have had a blood test showing you are immune

If you are considered immune you will not have to stay home in quarantine if you come into contact with someone who has measles.

You can find out if you are immune by:

- checking the vaccination page of your Wellchild or Plunket book (if you were vaccinated in New Zealand)
- checking your immunisation certificate
- looking at your online health record
- contacting your healthcare or hauora provider

People at risk of serious illness

Some people are more at risk of becoming very sick if they catch measles. This includes:

- pregnant people
- anyone with a chronic illness or a health condition that has weakened their immune system
- tamariki (children) younger than 5 years old, especially pēpi (babies) under 12 months old

All of these groups will be less likely to catch measles if other people in their whānau are vaccinated.

Children should be vaccinated on time at 12 and 15 months old. Those with a chronic illness or an illness which has weakened immune system should check with their doctor if they should get vaccinated.



For health advice

Call Healthline for free anytime on 0800 611 116.



Disability Helpline

A dedicated Disability Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support disabled people. Call free on 0800 11 12 13 or text 8988 for help and information.



For more information:

Visit www.health.govt.nz/measles