

Measles – what you can do NOW

Get ready NOW - be prepared before Measles is in our communities

Ensuring your tamariki are immunised against measles will prevent them getting sick and will help to ensure they don't miss learning opportunities; and for older rangatahi ensure they don't miss arts and sports tournaments, NECA school exams, the school ball, or other important activities later in the year.

Why are we so worried about measles?

Measles is a very serious illness and it spreads much faster than COVID-19.

What is measles?

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness spread through the air by sneezing and coughing. **Measles can be serious with one** in three people developing ear infections, pneumonia, or diarrhoea. Severe cases may require hospitalisation.

It usually takes about 10 days from contact with the measles virus to become unwell. The first signs are a high fever and runny nose, cough, and red eyes. About four to five days later the rash starts on the neck and face and then spreads over the body in the next days. People are infectious from four days before the rash develops to four days after.



Protect your tamariki and whānau

The best prevention against measles is to ensure everyone in your family (born on or after 1969¹) has had two MMR vaccinations.

To check whether you have been vaccinated, contact your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider. If you're unable to find out if you have been vaccinated, it's recommended you get vaccinated as soon as possible. There's no risk in getting extra MMR doses – it's important to know you've had two doses.

¹ People born before 1 January 1969 are considered immune to measles as they grew up when measles occurred frequently in the community.

Vaccines are **free** for

- tamariki under 18 years old (it does not matter what their visa or citizenship status is) and
- Adults who were born on or after 1 January 1969.

What is considered 'fully vaccinated' for tamariki?

Age	Immunity
0 to <12 months of age	Not immune – not yet vaccinated
12 months to 15 months	One documented dose of MMR = fully immunised for age
Over 15 months	Two documented doses of MMR = fully immunised for age

What about adults?

Adults are considered protected if they have had doctor diagnosed measles or two doses of a measles vaccine (MMR) after 12 months of age. Measles immunisation has occurred at different ages since introduced in NZ in 1969. The following table will assist adults to determine if they are protected.

What year were you born?	Are you protected?	Recommended action
Adult born before 1 January 1969 in NZ	Yes, you are assumed to be protected as measles was common in NZ at this time.	No action required
Adult born between 1969 and 1980 (inclusive) in NZ	Probably not – as only 1 dose of measles vaccine was offered at 10 months of age. The vaccine is less effective if given before 12 months of age.	Get a second MMR vaccine
Born between 1981 to 1990 in NZ	You are protected if you had 2 measles vaccines.	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine.
Born between 1991 - 1996 in NZ	People born 1991 to 1996 may not have had a second measles vaccine. This was when the second measles vaccine (MMR) was changed from 11 years to 4 years. Children aged 5 to 10 years at this time were offered catch up MMR vaccine through schools but uptake and coverage was not high.	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine.
Born in NZ from 1997	You are protected if you have had 2 measles vaccines – previously given at 12-15 months of age and the other at 4 years. From October 2020 the first dose of MMR is at 12 months and the second at 15 months.	Check if you have had 2 measles vaccines. If in doubt get a second MMR vaccine.

Further information:

- www.immunise.health.nz/about-vaccines/nz-immunisations/measles-mumps-and-rubella-mmr-vaccine/
- Call Healthline on 0800 611 116 if you have symptoms and need advice