

Information about measles

Measles is a serious viral disease that can make people very sick. It can spread very easily amongst people who have not had the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine or had measles before.



How measles spreads

Measles spreads easily between people who are not protected against the virus (immune). It is spread by breathing, sneezing or coughing. You can catch it just by going into a room someone with measles was in up to one hour before.



Know the symptoms



Red, blotchy
rash



Fever



Sore, watery
pink eyes



Cough



Runny nose

The rash normally appears three to seven days after the other symptoms. This starts on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body.

If you feel unwell with measles symptoms you should stay home until you've spoken to a health professional. Call your doctor or ring Healthline for free on 0800 611 116.



Get vaccinated – protect yourself and others against measles

You are considered immune if you have had two MMR vaccinations. Babies with one MMR dose after 12 months, AND if aged under 15 months, are also considered immune.

The vaccine is free and available to anyone in New Zealand born after 1 Jan 1969. To get your vaccine contact your doctor. If you are not sure whether you have been vaccinated, it is safe to get the MMR vaccine again.



If you have measles symptoms, such as a fever and a rash, you should seek medical advice urgently. Call your doctor or ring Healthline for free anytime on 0800 611 116.

Please do not visit a medical centre or hospital without calling first as you may risk passing on the virus to others. In an emergency call 111.

A dedicated Disability Helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call free on 0800 11 12 13 or text 8988. You can also access this helpline using the NZ Relay Service for assistance – visit www.nzrelay.co.nz.

A person with experience or knowledge of disability will answer your call from 8am to 8pm. After 8pm calls are answered by a trained member of the Healthline team.

Check if you're protected

You are considered immune to measles if you:

- Were born before 1 Jan 1969
- Have had measles before
- Have had two MMR vaccinations, and the last dose was over a month ago. Babies under 15 months are considered immune if they have had one MMR dose after 12 months of age, given at least a month ago
- Have had a blood test showing you are immune

If you're immune, you won't have to stay home in quarantine if you come into contact with someone who has measles.

To check if you and your whānau are immune, check your Wellchild Tamiriki Ora or Plunket book or contact your doctor.

COVID-19 vs measles

COVID-19 and measles can feel very similar to start with. This is why it's important to test yourself for COVID-19 if you have cold and flu symptoms and stay home if you're unwell, even if your test result is negative.

You should seek medical advice if

- your symptoms get worse
- they don't go away after 48 hours
- a second COVID-19 test also comes back negative
- You develop symptoms specific to measles, such as:
 - a blotchy rash
 - sore and watery pink eyes

If in doubt seek help. Contact your doctor or call Healthline for free on 0800 611 116.

People at risk of serious illness

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

- Anyone with a chronic illness or a weakened immune system
- Children younger than five years old who have not had one dose of the MMR vaccination
- Babies younger than 12 months who are too young to receive the first dose of the MMR vaccine
- Pregnant women who are not immune

If you or your whānau are in these groups, it's even more important you get vaccinated if you can.

Pregnant women and children aged 12 months and younger cannot get vaccinated, however they will be less likely to catch measles if others in their whānau get vaccinated.

If you catch measles

If a test shows you have measles you'll need to stay home and isolate. You can leave your home five days after you develop a rash, following a final check with a health professional.

Most people can isolate safely at home. It takes around seven to ten days to recover from when you first get symptoms. Around 1 in 10 people with measles need to go to hospital because of their symptoms.

A health professional will be in touch regularly if you need to isolate. They'll also identify anyone else at risk of catching measles from you, and provide them with further information.

If you're a contact

If you've been in contact with someone who has measles and you aren't considered immune you'll need to go in to quarantine.

The quarantine period will typically last around 14 days. A health professional will explain when you need to quarantine and how long for, and check in on you regularly.

Isolation & quarantine support

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



For more information visit:
www.health.govt.nz/measles