

MMR talking points

- Being vaccinated means you'll be protected against Measles, Mumps and Rubella Diseases and you can't pass it on to vulnerable people.
- These diseases are very contagious. If you come in contact with someone with measles, mumps or rubella and you are not vaccinated, you are very likely to catch it and pass it on to other unvaccinated people.
- If you're not if sure you have been vaccinated with MMR, it's best to get immunised.
- It is safe to have the MMR vaccine if you have been vaccinated as a child and you cannot remember / find documentation that you have had the vaccine.
- You will need 2 doses of MMR, at least three months apart. Once you have had two doses you will be protected for life and you will not need a booster or another MMR in later life.
- It can take around 2 weeks for a person to be fully immune after a vaccination.

Who should NOT get the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is a live vaccine. It should not be given to those who:

- are pregnant
- have a severe weakness of your immune system
- have had a severe allergic response (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine or part of this vaccine before
- have had another live vaccine within the past 4 weeks.

MMR vaccine and pregnancy

- If you were not immunised with MMR before becoming pregnant, **you should not receive the MMR** vaccine during pregnancy.
- If you are of childbearing age, you should avoid pregnancy for 1 month after having a dose of the MMR vaccine.
- If you are breastfeeding (and not pregnant) you can receive the MMR vaccine safely.
- If you were vaccinated with MMR prior to becoming pregnant you are almost certainly protected from Measles mumps and rubella

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Measles

- Measles is highly contagious. One person with measles can pass on the disease to 13 other people who have not been vaccinated. Measles spreads through droplets in the air. An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing they have the disease.
- If you're not vaccinated it can make you very sick. Symptoms typically begin 10 days after becoming infected with high fever, cough, runny nose, and red watery eyes. The measles rash appears 3 – 5 days after the fever begins. It starts with small red spots, some of which may be raised. Groups of spots give the skin a blotchy red appearance. It first appears along the hairline and behind the ears, spreads to the face and upper neck, and then proceeds down the body. The rash usually lasts 4–6 days.
- Up to one-third of people with measles experience one or more complications, which can include diarrhoea, ear infection which can lead to hearing loss, lung infections, laryngitis, and inflammation of the brain.
- One in ten people with measles will require hospital treatment. Children under five years old are more likely to develop complications than adults. Even with treatment, one or two out of 1,000 people with measles will die.
- Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) occurs in about 1 in 1000 measles cases, with some of these people dying and 1 in 3 being left with permanent brain damage.
- In the most recent New Zealand outbreak, more than 2,000 people contracted measles in 2019 and 700 had to go to hospital. Māori and Pasifika were particularly affected.
- Having only 1 dose of the MMR vaccine gives you a 95% chance of being protected against measles. 2 doses increases this to 99%.
- You are deemed as having immunity to Measles if you:
 - were born before 1 January 1969 (you are presumed to be immune following exposure to the wild virus)
 - have documentation of immunity or previous infection
 - have documentation of 2 doses of measles vaccine
- Having MMR protects people in your whanau and community who are at risk of potentially fatal complications from measles. Those most at risk are:
 - Anyone with a chronic illness or a weakened immune system
 - babies younger than 12 months who will not receive their own vaccination until after they are 12 months

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Mumps

- Mumps is a highly infectious illness caused by a virus.
- Symptoms of mumps usually develop 12 – 25 days after becoming infected.
- The main symptom is swollen salivary glands (at the side of your face). With high temperature, pain when chewing, sore throat, tiredness.
- 1 in 6 cases mumps cause very mild symptoms
- Unvaccinated adolescents and adults are most at risk and more likely to experience severe mumps disease and complications.
- Inflamed testicles, occurs in 20-25% of adolescent and adult males and in rare cases causes sterility.
- Inflamed ovaries occurs in 5% of adolescent and adult females. Sterility occurs rarely.
- Temporary deafness to high frequency sounds occurs in 4 in 100 cases. Profound and permanent deafness is rare, usually on one side, and occurs in 1 in 15,000 cases.
- Pregnant women who get mumps during the first trimester of pregnancy have an increased risk of miscarriage, but there is no evidence that mumps causes fetal abnormalities.
- Having only 1 dose of the MMR vaccine is not enough protection against mumps – you need to have 2 to complete the course. Two doses provides 85% protection against mumps.
- A small number of people who have been vaccinated will still catch mumps, but they are less likely to be seriously ill or have rare complications.

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Rubella

- It is spread through the air when someone swallows or breathes the cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person.
- The incubation period (time from infection to onset of symptoms) varies from 14 to 23 days.
- In most people, the symptoms of rubella are mild, such as fever, skin rash, headache and joint pain. In many cases there are no symptoms at all.
- More complications occur in adults with rubella than children; temporary painful or swollen joints are seen in approximately half of adolescents and adults with symptoms.
- Rubella may also occasionally present as a more severe illness, indistinguishable from measles, and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) occurs in 1 out of 6,000 cases.
- Rubella is of serious concern if contracted in the early stages of pregnancy, as it is highly likely to cause severe abnormalities in the developing baby, referred to as Congenital Rubella Syndrome. These include cataracts, deafness, heart abnormalities, intellectual disability and behavioural problems.
- Infants born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome (infected when the mother was pregnant) are considered infectious until they are one year old.