

# People at high risk in a measles outbreak

Some people who get measles are at higher risk of severe illness or complications. These include:

- Non-immune pregnant women
- People with a weak immune system (from illness or medicine), and
- Infants under 15 months old.

**If you think you or your child may be at high risk, and you've been in contact with someone with measles, please call your family doctor, maternity carer or specialist as soon possible for advice.**

**It's important to phone ahead, rather than just turn up. When you arrive at the health centre or hospital, stay in the car and call (or send in whoever is with you) to let staff know you have arrived. This will prevent the spread of infection to others in the waiting room.**

## Pregnant women

- Non-immune women who become ill with measles while pregnant are at risk of miscarriage, premature labour and having a low birth weight baby.
- Pregnant women **should not** receive the [MMR vaccine](#).
- Women of child bearing age should **avoid pregnancy for one month** after having a dose of the MMR vaccine.
- If you are **pregnant and have not had a measles vaccine** in the past you **should not receive MMR** while pregnant. See your doctor if you are unsure about your measles immunity; this can be checked by a blood test.
- If you are not immune, the people with whom you are in close contact can help protect you and your unborn baby by being vaccinated against measles (if they are not already immune).
- If you are **pregnant and have had two measles vaccines in the past** you are almost certainly protected. See your doctor if you are unsure so that your measles immunity can be checked.
- Pregnant women who think they have measles, or have come in contact with someone with measles, must call their doctor or lead maternity carer as soon as possible. You may also need to go into [quarantine](#).

## People with a weak immune system

- Some people are born with a weak immune system and can't be vaccinated with the MMR vaccine.
- Some illnesses (e.g. leukaemia, HIV, transplant patients) and medications (high dose steroids, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and other immune suppressing medicines) can weaken the immune system and make people susceptible to measles even if they've had a measles vaccination in the past.
- People with a weakened immune system **should not** receive an MMR vaccine.

- If you think you might have a weakened immune system and think you have measles, or have come in contact with someone with measles, you must call your doctor or specialist as soon as possible.
- The people with whom you are in close contact can help protect you by being vaccinated against measles (if they are not already immune).

### Children under 15 months old

- Because the first MMR vaccine is not given until 15 months old, children younger than this have no measles immunity and are at high risk of the disease.
- If you think a non-immune child has measles, or has been in contact with someone with measles, please call your family doctor as soon as possible.
- The people who are in close contact with your child can help protect them by being vaccinated against measles (if they are not already immune).

**If you are high risk, it is important that all your [close contacts](#) are vaccinated. People unsure if they are vaccinated should call their doctor. Or they can check their Well Child/Tamariki Ora or Plunket book records if they have them.**

### For more information

**Free phone Healthline on 0800 611 116** or visit:

- Auckland Regional Public Health Service: [www.arphs.health.nz](http://www.arphs.health.nz)
- Ministry of Health: [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)
- Immunisation Advisory Centre: [www.immune.org.nz](http://www.immune.org.nz) (or free phone – 0800 466 863)

*Last reviewed April 2019*