

People exposed to measles: Information for ‘close contacts’

If you have been near someone with measles, and shared the same air, you may be a ‘close contact.’ **This means that if you are not immune, you may get the disease.**

How do I know if I’m immune?

You are **most likely to be immune** (protected against) measles if:

- **You have received at least one dose (preferably two) of the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine**, as documented in your medical records or Well Child Tamariki Ora or Plunket book. One dose of MMR vaccine protects about 95 percent of people, and two doses protect about 99 percent. Because measles is so infectious, two doses are necessary to prevent outbreaks.
- **You were born before 1 January 1969.** Before 1969, there was no national measles vaccination campaign in New Zealand and almost everyone caught the disease as a child. Those who recover are almost always immune, so it’s very rare to see any measles in people born in New Zealand before 1969. Measles vaccine was available in some other countries before 1969 so some adults born overseas may have received a vaccine. People with concerns about whether they are immune should talk to their doctor or contact the Immunisation Advisory Centre (0800 IMMUNE – 0800 466 863).

You are **most likely NOT to be immune**, and therefore **at risk of getting measles, if:**

- You were born **after 1 January 1969** and haven’t had at least one dose (preferably two) of MMR vaccine after your first birthday, or had measles already. This includes babies, children and adults.
- You have a weakened immune system (due to medication or illness). You are then at risk of measles **even if you have had measles previously or been vaccinated.**
- You are pregnant and not fully vaccinated.

What do I need to do?

- If you are most likely to be immune (see above), no action is needed. Simply carry on life as normal.
- If you are most likely NOT immune (see above), you should:
 - Seek medical advice from your health provider, or call Healthline (0800 611 116), and stay at home in quarantine, away from others. Quarantine information is available on the measles page of our website: www.arphs.health.nz.
 - Talk to your doctor, midwife or specialist as soon as possible if you or your child is at high risk because you are pregnant and not fully immunised, your infant is under 12 months old, or because you or your child has a weak immune system.
 - Watch for measles symptoms. These include fever, cough, runny nose and sore red eyes, followed 3-5 days later by a rash that starts on the face and neck before moving down the body. It takes 7-14 days for a contact who has become infected with measles to start having symptoms. You can spread measles to other people even before you feel sick, which is why quarantine is so important.

- If you or your child has any symptoms, seek medical advice:
 - **Ring before visiting your doctor** to avoid spreading the virus in the waiting room.
 - When you get to the health centre or hospital, stay in the car and call (or send in whoever is with you) to let them know you've arrived.
 - Stay away from unvaccinated people or those with a weak immune system.

If, after your quarantine period, you have not become sick with measles (and you are not pregnant), it is recommended that you get vaccinated with the MMR vaccine to avoid being at risk again in the future.

For more information

Free phone Healthline on 0800 611 116 or visit:

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

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