

Guide to Managing Measles in Workplaces

Workplaces need to know what to do if someone with measles has exposed others on their premises.

1. If any staff at your work is suspected of having measles, they should be sent home until they are seen by a doctor. They can return only if cleared of measles. You do not need to do anything else unless **measles is confirmed** by a doctor or through a test.
2. **If measles is confirmed**, the person should not return to your organisation until after the end of the 4th day from the rash (day 0 is the day the rash began).

You will need to know their infectious period. The person with measles should know this from their doctor, otherwise you can calculate this by asking when the rash started. A person is infectious 5 days before their rash appeared, the day of the rash and then 4 days after. Write these dates down:

Person was infectious from _____ to _____

Person with measles to provide the dates from their doctor

The **person with measles** should stay at home until the end of the infectious period.

3. Work out who else may have been exposed to the measles virus in your workplace or organisation – known as ‘Close Contacts.’ This is anyone who has been in the same space as the person during this infectious period, and potentially shared the same air. It would include the same office or room. Please see Q and As (overleaf) for who is a Close Contact.

After you have identified close contacts, you will need to inform them and ask them to go into quarantine at home if they are not immune. Please distribute the [Information for Close Contacts](#) fact sheet which explains how to check immunity, and how long to go into quarantine.

You can also use our [Measles Quarantine Calculator](#) to provide the end of quarantine date to close contacts. This is how long contacts should be away from work, if they cannot prove their immunity by providing vaccination or medical records. Quarantine is 7 days after first contact with the person while infectious with measles, to 14 days after the last contact.

End of Quarantine _____ *Use the online calculator*

People are immune (and are free to continue as normal) if they -

1. Have documented at least one measles mumps rubella (MMR) vaccination more two weeks ago
2. OR have had a documented diagnosis of measles
3. OR were born before 1 Jan 1969 (because they are likely to have had measles as a child).

Staff or other close contacts under 50 years who do not have proof of at least one MMR vaccination, or having had measles will need to stay in quarantine.

4. Please be aware that some people are at greater risk of complications from measles, such as non immune pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system. These staff should talk to their doctor if they have been exposed to measles at your service

Information for Close Contacts Exposed to Measles

YOU HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS MEASLES

You have been given this information as you've been near someone with measles. This means if you are not immune (protected against measles), you may get it too.

1. You are likely to be IMMUNE and safe from measles if:

- You were born before 1 January 1969. Before 1969, almost everyone caught the disease as a child whether they were in New Zealand or overseas.
- You have received at least one dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, and you had this vaccine more than 2 weeks before you were exposed to measles. Vaccinations are recorded in your Well Child/Tamariki Ora or Plunket book, or by your GP.
- You have previously been diagnosed with measles. Once you have recovered from measles, your body is protected from future illness.

If you are immune - no action is needed

If you are likely to be immune, simply carry on life as normal.

2. YOU ARE NOT IMMUNE AND ARE AT RISK OF GETTING MEASLES IF:

- You were born after 1 January 1969, haven't had measles and
 - haven't had at least one dose of MMR vaccine since your first birthday or
 - your first MMR was less than two weeks before you were exposed to measles.
- You are 'immunocompromised' (a medical condition or medication has weakened your immune system).

If you are not immune – you need to take action

- You need to **stay at home in quarantine** (see information overleaf).
- **Watch for measles symptoms.** These include fever, cough, runny nose and sore red eyes, followed by a rash that starts on the face and neck before moving down the body.
- **Phone before visiting a doctor** or call Healthline on 0800 611 116

WHAT IS QUARANTINE?

Quarantine means staying home, away from others who are not immune until you know you are not getting sick with measles. It takes 7-14 days for a person who has become infected with measles to start having symptoms.

Why do I need to stay in quarantine?

Staying in quarantine is important because if you are getting sick with measles, you can spread it to others even before you feel sick or show symptoms.

Measles is highly infectious and can spread quickly and easily to others. It can make people very sick and lead to hospitalisation and serious complications. It is especially dangerous for non-immune pregnant women, babies and people with weakened immune systems.

Being in quarantine means you should not use public transport, or visit neighbours, family and friends (and they should not visit you if they are not immune).

Do not go to:

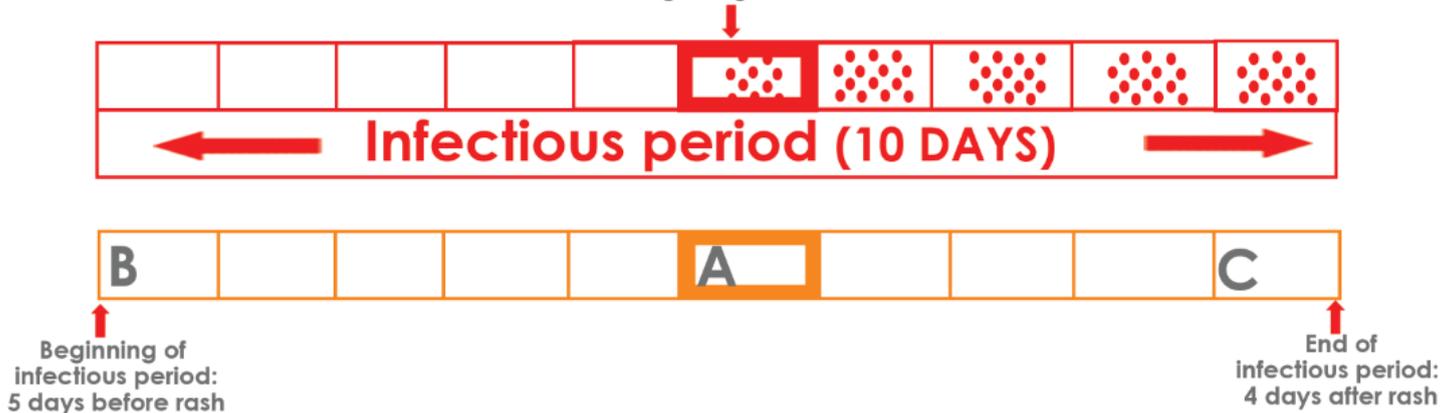
- Work, preschool, school, university, college and technical institutes
- Church or other places of worship
- Social or sports activities (including gyms, shopping malls and movies)
- Supermarkets and food venues, such as restaurants, cafes, takeaways and food markets.

How long do I stay in quarantine?

Calculate the infectious period first – as this is when you were exposed to measles

- In Box A, write down the date the rash appeared on the person with measles (ask them the date)
- Count back 5 days before the rash date, and write this date into Box B.
- Count forward 4 days after the rash date, and write this date into Box C.
- The person could spread measles between dates B and date C. This is their infectious period.

Beginning of rash



If you saw the person with measles during their infectious period, tick the dates that you saw them.

Calculating your quarantine period

- If you are not immune to measles, you should stay at home in quarantine.
 - Your quarantine time starts 7 days after the first date you saw the person with measles.
 - Your quarantine time finishes at the end the 14th day after the last date you saw the person with measles.
- An online quarantine calculator is available at www.arphs.health.nz/measles-q-calculator.

Please stay at home in quarantine for the whole period.

Q and As for workplaces and organisations

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE FOR MEASLES?

Businesses can face serious disruption if a case of measles spreads through their workplace, as everyone who has been near the person (close contacts) will have to go into quarantine for 7 to 14 days, if they don't have proof of immunity. Please be aware of the actions required - isolating a suspected measles case, identifying who may be developing measles as a close contact, and establishing their quarantine period if not immune. Please check the vaccine priority notice above if encouraging staff vaccination.

WHO IS A CLOSE CONTACT?

Anyone who has been in the same room or office as the person with measles is a close contact - the smaller the room and the longer the time, the greater the risk.

Your organization will need to assess the level of risk - often it is useful to think about who sits in the area close to the person with measles, and also who they had meetings with during their infectious period.

If the only exposure is for a short period - for example in a large lunchroom, a bathroom or a lift - there will be a lower risk, and those people would not be considered close contacts. There is still a small possibility however that others may catch measles. For that reason, it is useful to provide information widely to all staff, ask them to check their immunity, and to watch out for measles symptoms - high fever, runny nose, cough, sore red eyes and later a rash starting on the head and travelling down the body. There is information on the ARPHS website. Remind staff if they feel unwell to ring their general practice before they arrive, so they can be isolated from the waiting room.

I HAVE STAFF BORN OVERSEAS, HOW DO I DETERMINE THEIR IMMUNITY?

Staff exposed to measles need to have evidence of immunity, otherwise they should be in quarantine. Please check the chart below.

If close contacts have not documented evidence of a measles diagnosis or vaccination, they can see their doctor for a blood test to determine their immunity. They will have to stay home until the results prove immunity.

<p><i>People are immune and not at risk of measles if they...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have had one (ideally two) doses of <u>Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine</u> documented in a Wellchild/Tamariki Ora book or at a doctor's practice. • Had this MMR or other measles vaccine longer than two weeks ago • Were born before 1969, as they would have had measles as a child in New Zealand or overseas • Have been previously diagnosed with measles • Have had a blood test confirming immunity
<p><i>People are not immune and are at risk of measles if they...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have had no doses of MMR vaccine • Have never had measles or have a severely weakened immune system.

WILL STAFF HAVE TO PAY FOR BLOOD TESTS TO CHECK IMMUNITY TO MEASLES?

If the staff member has been exposed to measles, has no proof of immunity, but needs to return to work, their doctor can mark their blood test 'close contact' and there should be no charge. If they are already required to be in quarantine because of the dates of exposure, in some cases their doctor may be able to arrange a home visit for a lab test - they should not go to a community laboratory.

IF STAFF ARE VACCINATED STRAIGHT AWAY, CAN THEY COME TO WORK?

It takes two weeks for an MMR vaccination to protect an individual, so staff who have been exposed to measles will still need to stay home in quarantine, even if they get immunised.

GUIDE TO MANAGING MEASLES - WORKPLACES

THERE ARE PREGNANT WOMEN (OR SOMEONE IMMUNOCOMPROMISED) IN OUR ORGANISATION – WHAT DO I TELL THEM?

Any pregnant woman who knows she is immune or has been vaccinated with even one dose of MMR is not considered to be at risk. Non immune pregnant women who may have been in contact with the measles case should see their lead maternity carer or doctor. Anyone receiving cancer treatment or with a weakened immune system should also seek medical advice.

THE PERSON WITH MEASLES PREPARED FOOD, IS THIS A WORRY?

Measles is an airborne virus, not one transmitted through food. It is the people breathing the same air in the same room as the food handler who are most at risk, not those eating the food.

CAN I GET MY STAFF VACCINATED?

See the current vaccination priorities note at the front of this Q and A.

THE STAFF MEMBER HAS HAD CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC?

If the case (person with measles) has been near members of the public, in the same room or space for instance, and you have contact details for these people, you could alert them and suggest they watch out for the symptoms. Measles is, however, circulating widely in the community, so consider whether their risk is higher than if they were out in the community.

If the staff member has been in contact with measles but does not currently have measles, you do not have to do anything, unless they are subsequently confirmed with measles.

THE STAFF MEMBER HAS TRAVELLED ON A PLANE?

Please ask the person with measles to tell Auckland Regional Public Health Service if they have travelled outside of Auckland, so we can let other public health services know. If the person travelling was exposed to measles but does not have confirmed measles themselves, we don't need to know.

DO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO MEASLES HAVE TO TELL OTHERS?

You do not need to tell anyone else that you may have been exposed to measles, or are in quarantine, except for visitors. If you are confirmed with measles by your doctor or a test, then you will need to inform your workplace that you have measles, and then tell any family and social contacts.

I'VE ONLY HAD ONE MMR – DO I HAVE TO GET ANOTHER VACCINATION, OR STAY AWAY FROM WORK?

You are considered immune during this outbreak if you have only had one MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine, provided it has been at least two weeks since the vaccination. It takes this time to provide protection.

It is a good idea to have a second MMR, but if you are an adult, this will only be possible when there are enough vaccine supplies (see note at front of this Q and A). Children are a priority for two vaccinations, and should have an MMR at 12 months, and a second dose at four years of age.