

Information for people with measles

Here's what you need to know about looking after yourself and your whānau while you isolate at home with measles / suspected measles. For health advice call your GP or family doctor or ring Healthline for free anytime on 0800 611 116.

You need to isolate until:

You can leave your home the day after this, following a final check of your symptoms by a health professional.



What it means to isolate

Measles spreads very easily from person to person. To protect others you should not leave your home while you are isolating.

You also need to stay away from work or school, as well as other places you normally go such as the shops or church, and you cannot get on public transport. You also shouldn't see others or have people come into your home, unless they are told they are immune.

We'll call you regularly

While you're in isolation a health professional will call regularly to check on your symptoms and your whānau.

In the first call they'll ask where you've been recently and who you've seen. This is to check if other people you've been in contact with are at risk of catching measles too.

Your whānau and measles

People you live with who or have seen recently will need to stay home too if they are at risk of catching the virus.

They will be considered at risk if they were born after 1 January 1969 and have:

- not had measles before or
- not had two doses of the MMR vaccine at or after 12 months of age, or aren't sure if they've had the MMR vaccine

We will check who needs to stay home and provide them with more information on staying safe and symptoms to look out for. People who aren't at risk of catching the virus do not need to stay home. They can continue with their life as normal.

Protecting your whānau

We may recommend people you've seen recently who are at risk of catching measles are vaccinated or given medicine. This may reduce the chance of them catching measles or getting very unwell, however they will still need to stay home following this.

Finishing your isolation

You are no longer at risk of passing on measles to others four days after you developed your rash. This will be the date above. You can finish isolating and return to your normal life the day after this, following a final symptom check.



Help & support

GETTING FOOD & OTHER ITEMS

Because you are isolating you should not go to the shops. If you need help getting essential items, such as food or medicines, contact a friend or family member for support. If they are at risk of getting measles they shouldn't come into your home when they deliver the items.

WORK AND FINANCES

If you need to take time off work you will need to take sick leave. If you need financial support contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009 to check if you are eligible for any help. This is available Monday to Friday, 7am to 6pm, or Saturdays from 8am to 1pm.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

This can be a worrying time for you and your whānau. If you need help or someone to speak to contact Need to Talk? — call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you or someone you live with has a life-threatening emergency call 111 immediately. Tell them you have measles when you phone.



What to expect over the next 5 – 10 days

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Symptoms normally take around seven to ten days to appear after you have caught the virus. In the first few days of being unwell people usually have:

- A fever
- A cough
- A runny nose
- Sore and watery pink eyes
- You may also get white spots inside your mouth

Around three to seven days after the first symptoms people start to develop a rash. This will start on the head or face, behind the ears or hairline. It then spreads to the rest of the body, arms and legs. This is the point when people feel most unwell.

The rash will fade after about a week, leaving a slight mark on the skin, but this will not be permanent.

SEVERE SYMPTOMS

Call your doctor or Healthline for advice if you experience any of the following:

- Ear infections
- Diarrhoea, which can also lead to dehydration
- Pneumonia

TREATING YOURSELF AT HOME

People with measles need to get plenty of rest. If you have medicine you take normally continue to have this.

To ease your symptoms you can:

- Use pain relief, such as paracetamol, to reduce pain and discomfort
- Drink plenty of water or other fluids to avoid dehydration
- Treat sore eyes by wiping the crustiness from the eyelids and lashes using cotton wool and water (use a separate piece of cotton wool for each eye), and avoid bright lights



When to get emergency help – call 111

If you:

- Have trouble breathing
- Have a stiff neck
- Feel drowsy or cannot be woken up
- Are coughing up green or yellow thick mucous
- Experience backpain
- Have sore ears
- Have a fit (seizure)
- Do not pee for 10 hours

For your child if:

- They experience any of the symptoms on the left
- They become floppy, very drowsy or are difficult to wake
- Their breathing becomes very fast or noisy
- They become very pale or have blue lips or gums

Always call first if you need to visit a medical practice or hospital



Recovering from measles

Some people take a long time to recover from measles, and it can have a long-term impact on your health. Following your isolation period continue to monitor your symptoms and if they do not go away or get worse again contact your doctor for advice.

It's also recommended you speak to your doctor about getting the MMR vaccine. While you no longer need protection against measles, you are still at risk of catching Mumps and Rubella. The vaccine protects you against these viral illnesses and limits the chance you'll have to isolate or quarantine again if you come into contact with someone who has them.