

Managing measles in early learning services

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can be very serious. Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) will assist you to manage any measles cases at your Early Learning Service.

- Please check your Immunisation Register is updated regularly. Remember to check staff's immunity.
- Any child or staff member from your service who is suspected of having measles must be sent home until they are seen by a doctor. If measles is confirmed, they should not return to your service until five days after the rash first appeared.
- If the case is confirmed with measles, you will need to identify **close contacts** that may be at risk – those who have been in a confined space with the case. ARPHS will contact you and assist you if a case is confirmed.
- Please advise **close contacts** (staff and children) to stay at home if they are not immune. They should check for symptoms until the end of the quarantine period. This might be one to two weeks depending on when they were exposed to measles.
- Anyone considered at high risk from measles, such as non immune pregnant women, babies under 15 months or anyone with a weakened immune system, may also need to stay away from your service.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms include a high fever, runny nose, cough and sore red eyes, followed several days later by a rash starting on the face and neck before spreading to the rest of the body. Someone with measles can spread it to others from five days before the rash appears until five days after.

What do you do if you have a suspected case of measles at your service?

If you suspect measles because a child or staff member has the symptoms above, keep them away from others and send them home.

The child or staff member will need to see a doctor and be cleared of measles before they can return to your service. **It's important that they, or their caregiver, ring ahead to let the health centre or hospital know so they can be isolated** on arrival.

If the child or staff member is confirmed as having measles, they will need to stay at home **until five days after their rash first appeared, with as little contact as possible with non-immune people**. Families and staff members can find [Information for People with Suspected measles](#) and [Information for Close Contacts Exposed to Measles](#) on the [ARPHS website](#).

Could others at the centre be at risk?

You do not need to take further action unless ARPHS tells you there has been a clinically confirmed measles case at your centre. ARPHS will assist you to decide who is a **close contact** – someone who has been in a confined space with the person with measles.

Staff and children are at risk of catching measles if they have **a) been in a confined space with the case AND b) are not immune** (see definitions over the page).

You will need to provide advice to **close contacts** about checking immunity, staying in quarantine and checking for symptoms. ARPHS has template letters for you to pass on.

Who is immune?

<i>People are immune and not at risk of measles if they...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have had one (ideally two) doses of <u>Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine</u> documented in a Well Child/Tamariki Ora book or at a doctor's practice at least two weeks prior.• Were born before 1969, as they are likely to have had measles as a child• Have been diagnosed with measles by a doctor in the past• Have had a blood test confirming immunity
<i>People are not immune, or may be at risk of severe measles if they...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have had no doses of MMR vaccine (including babies under 15 months)• Have a weakened immune system

Those at greater risk from measles

Please identify **anyone at your centre who is at high risk** from measles. They may need to stay away and seek medical advice. This includes –

- Non-immune pregnant women. Non-immune women who get measles in pregnancy could have a miscarriage, premature labour or low birth weight babies. Women **should not** receive the MMR vaccination while pregnant.
- Children under the age of 15 months, as most will not have been vaccinated. In this outbreak, 12 month olds can have their first MMR1 vaccination, so those who have had this early can still attend.
- People with weakened immune systems from illness (e.g. cancer) or from certain treatments or medicines.

What is quarantine?

A number of people may be advised to stay home from your service for one to two weeks after they have been exposed to measles. These may include:

- **Anyone suspected of having measles** but waiting for test results. They are free to return to your centre if the test proves they do not have measles.
- **Any confirmed case** will need to stay at home for five days after the onset of a rash.
- **Child or adult close contacts who are not immune.** The quarantine period for close contacts starts seven days after the first day of exposure to measles and finishes 14 days after the last day of exposure to measles. A [measles quarantine calculator](#) is available for people to work out their quarantine period.

Infection control

- If you have a confirmed case of measles at your service, no special cleaning of toys is required – you can continue your normal toy-cleaning process. This is because the measles virus has a short survival time (less than two hours) and is rapidly inactivated by heat and sunlight.

What else do I need to do at my service?

- Ensure your service's Immunisation Register is regularly updated. Also check staff have been vaccinated.
- Inform parents and caregivers if there has been a case of measles. The only people who need to stay at home in quarantine, however, are those who are born after 1 Jan 1969, are not immune or cannot demonstrate immunity, or those who have a weakened immune system.
- Inform parents and staff about symptoms of measles so they can watch out for the illness.
- Encourage parents and staff who are unsure about vaccination to see their GP.

For more information:

- Auckland Regional Public Health Service: www.arphs.health.nz
- Immunisation Advisory Centre: www.immune.org.nz (0800 IMMUNE – 0800 466 863)
- Healthline, for free health advice: 0800 611 116