

People at high risk of measles complications

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 12 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 as possible for advice.

Non-immune 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.
- If you are **pregnant and have had two measles vaccines in the past** you are almost certainly protected.
- If you are not immune, you can ask your close family and friends to help protect you and your unborn baby by being vaccinated against measles (if they are not already immune).
- Non-immune 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](#) or isolation¹.

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. HIV) 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 have a weakened immune system and think you have measles, or have been in contact with someone with measles, you must call your doctor or specialist as soon as possible.

¹ **Quarantine** is the term used when non-immune, close contacts of a measles case are asked to stay at home until it's clear they have not caught the illness and can't spread it to others. **Isolation** is the term used when a person is confirmed as having measles and must stay at home away from others until they are no longer infectious.

- The people in close contact with you (e.g. living in your home) can help protect you by being vaccinated against measles (if they are not already immune).

Vaccinations of Children

- Children should have their two scheduled vaccinations at 12 months and 15 months.
- Infants will have some measles protection passed from their mothers in the womb, as long as their mothers are immune. However, this protection is not long-lasting, and fades between four and nine months. The exact timing is different for every baby.
- If you think a non-immune child has measles, or has been in contact with someone with measles, please call Healthline (0800 611 116) or 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).

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)

Last reviewed January 2021