

Kia Mataara! Information about measles

Measles can cause serious health problems for you, your whānau and the wider hapori, which can lead to hospitalisations or even death. Measles can weaken a person's immune system, leading to long-term effects on their health. Measles is very contagious which means it spreads very easily between people who are not immune.

Getting immunised is part of a collective action to ensure that the health among all of our communities across Aotearoa are protected; our pēpi, our mokopuna, our kaumātua, and our whānau with underlying health conditions.

Whether you're doing it for yourself or for others, to prevent serious outbreaks in our community, which can cause great harm to the health and safety of our whānau, this is the best way to support the future of Māori.

"Mā te rongō, ka mōhio,
Mā te mōhio, ka mārāma,
Mā te mārāma, ka mātau,
Mā te mātau, ka ora."

Protecting my health and the health of my whānau and hapori from measles. Am I immune to measles?

You are considered immune to measles if you have:

- had measles before, OR
- received 2 measles vaccines after the age of 12 months (e.g. the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine).

If you were born or living in New Zealand before 1969, you are likely to be immune because nearly everyone caught measles before then. If you lived in another country before 1969 you will need to check with your healthcare provider.

It is important you check if you are immune to measles and to find medical records, such as immunisation records or test results, to confirm this. For more information on checking your immunity visit info.health.nz/measles-immunity

Me whakamaru i tō whakapapa – immunisation is one way to protect whakapapa

Immunisation is the best protection against measles. If you are not immune to measles, **or not sure if you're immune**, you should get vaccinated (for more information read the prevention section of this information sheet).

If you are immune and you are exposed to someone with measles, you won't need to quarantine (stay at home) or take any other special precautions to protect other people, your whānau and hapori, as you are already protected from getting and spreading measles.



Taha Tinana – signs and symptoms of measles

Measles symptoms can start anywhere from 7 to 21 days after you have been exposed to someone with measles but will usually start within 10 days.

The first symptoms of measles are like other respiratory (flu) illnesses, such as COVID-19 and influenza. Most importantly, with measles, a rash normally appears 3 to 7 days after the other symptoms. The rash starts on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body. **If you have a fever and rash, and you are not immune to measles (or you're not sure), follow the information in the seeking health advice section.**



Seeking health advice

If you think you or someone in your family has measles, you should stay at home and call your GP, doctor, Hauora or healthcare provider, or call Healthline free on 0800 611 116, anytime 24/7 for advice as soon as possible. **In an emergency call 111.**

It is important you call ahead if you are visiting a healthcare provider so they can protect others from being exposed. During your visit wear a disposable face mask that covers your nose and mouth at all times.



Kaitiakitanga – How can I keep my whānau and hapori safe? How does measles spread?

Measles spreads very easily between people who are not immune. Measles is passed on by a person with measles breathing, talking, sneezing or coughing near others. You can even catch measles by entering a room after the person with measles has left. 1 person with measles could spread it to as many as 18 other people.

A person with measles can spread it to others before they know they have it. This can happen from 4 days before until 4 days after the rash appears.



Watching out for whānau. Who is at risk of getting very sick with measles?

About 1 in 3 people with measles will be sick enough to need to go to hospital. Although this can happen to anyone, some people are more likely to get very sick if they get measles. This includes:

- tamariki aged under 5 years, especially pēpi and mokopuna aged under 12 months
- anyone with a weakened immune system, including hapū māmā and new māmā for up to 6 weeks after giving birth (if you get measles while you are hapū you could get very sick and it could also harm your pēpi).

Māori and Pacific peoples are more likely than other ethnic groups to be hospitalised with measles.



What happens if I get measles?

If you have measles, you will need to isolate (which means staying at home and not going to school or work) until 4 days after the rash started. This stops you from spreading measles to others.

As most people take 1 to 2 weeks to recover from measles, you might not feel well enough to return to your usual activities such as work or school at the end of your isolation period. It is important to give yourself time to recover.

You will be contacted by your public health service team who will provide you with information and support. This includes:

- checking on your symptoms and wellbeing
- asking you about where you went and who you spent time with while you were able to spread measles
- making sure you know what to do if your symptoms get worse.



What happens if I've been exposed to measles?

If you have been exposed to measles, you may be identified as a 'close' or 'casual contact'. A close contact is more likely to develop measles. The actions you will need to take depend on whether you are not immune, partially vaccinated or immune to measles.

Your public health service team will contact you to provide you with support and further information on what you need to do. They will check your records and may ask you to get a blood test to check if you are immune to measles.

If you are **not immune** you are at risk of getting and spreading measles. You will need to quarantine (stay at home) to prevent spreading measles to others.

If you **have only had 1 measles vaccination** you are considered **partially vaccinated, meaning you might not be immune to measles** and are at risk of getting and spreading it. You will need to:

- stay away from places measles could spread easily, such as healthcare providers, schools and early learning services
- stay away from people who could get very sick with measles (read the who is at risk of getting very sick with measles section above)
- monitor for measles symptoms and if you get any of these symptoms, it may mean you have measles and it is very important you isolate (stay at home) and get health advice.

If you are **immune** you are very unlikely to get and spread measles so you can continue your usual activities such as work and school, if you are feeling well. In the unlikely event you get measles symptoms, isolate (stay at home) and follow the seeking health advice section above.



Me ora te whakapapa – Immunisation is one way to protect whakapapa

As an individual, getting immunised strengthens your body's immunity against different infections like measles. Being immunised reduces the risk of these infections, lowers the chances of transmission and can prevent serious outbreaks. As more people get immunised, we develop a collective immunity. This collective immunity protects our whānau, our tamariki, our future.

99% of people who have had 2 measles vaccines (e.g. the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine) after the age of 12 months, will be immune to getting and spreading measles to others.

- Pēpi usually get their first MMR vaccination at 12 months old and their second at 15 months old. Getting your pēpi immunised on time is the best way to protect them.
- The MMR vaccine is **free** for all people aged under 18 years and for people aged 18 years and over who are eligible for free New Zealand healthcare. For information on eligibility to publicly funded healthcare visit [Get publicly funded health services | New Zealand Government](#).

- If you have a health condition that has weakened your immune system, speak to your healthcare provider to check if you can have the MMR vaccine.
- While you are hapū you cannot have the MMR vaccine, but you can have the MMR vaccine after giving birth and it is safe to have while breastfeeding. It is important to make sure you're fully immunised against measles if you're planning a pregnancy.
- If you don't know whether you have had 2 vaccinations for measles, it is recommended you get another MMR vaccine (it is safe to have extra doses).

For more information about MMR vaccine visit info.health.nz/MeaslesVaccine

Getting immunised is part of a collective action to ensure that the health among all of our communities across Aotearoa are protected; our pēpi, our mokopuna, our kaumātua, and our whānau with underlying health conditions.

Whether you're doing it for yourself or for others, to prevent serious outbreaks in our community, which can cause great harm to the health and safety of our whānau, this is the best way to support the future of Māori.

To get vaccinated contact your GP, doctor, Hauora or healthcare provider, or call the Vaccination Helpline free on 0800 28 29 26 (8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday) this service has interpreters available and you can choose to speak with a Māori advisor, a disability advisor, or use NZ Relay. You can also book a vaccination appointment at info.health.nz/bookavaccine. Many pharmacies offer MMR vaccination and some can also vaccinate tamariki. These providers can be found at healthpoint.co.nz/immunisation



For more information:

- Visit the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora website info.health.nz/measles
- Free NZ Relay Services are available at nzrelay.co.nz if you are Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or have speech communication difficulties.
- Call Healthline on **0800 611 116**, anytime 24/7 for free health advice and information about what to do next. You can choose to speak with a Māori clinician if you are calling between 8am and 8pm. Interpreter services and NZ Relay support are also available.
- For people living or visiting rurally, you can contact a doctor after hours at Ka Ora Telecare **0800 2 KA ORA (0800 252 672)** or www.kaora.co.nz
- A dedicated helpline for Disability support is available Monday to Friday, between 8.00am and 5.00pm. Call free on **0800 11 12 13** or text **8988** for help and information or visit healthpoint.co.nz/disability-helpline