
To:	General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
From:	Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health
Date:	8 March 2019
Title:	National Health Advisory: Measles Alert from the Ministry of Health

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

Measles Alert from the Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health wishes to remind all healthcare professionals and other people working in health care facilities, who were born on 1 January 1969 or later, to ensure that they are protected against measles. Healthcare workers are at greater risk of contracting measles (and other preventable diseases) than the general public, and risk passing on disease to vulnerable patients including infants.

Measles patients are infectious 5 days before and until 5 days after the rash appears, which means they can pass the disease on before they realise they are unwell. If a non-immune person is exposed to the disease, they are very likely to develop the condition themselves, and may need to be excluded from work for at least two weeks until they can prove immunity or are no longer infectious. If you do not know your immunity status and come into contact with measles, you will also need to be stood down from work during the possible incubation period until your immunity status is clarified.

Most people born in the 1970s or 1980s will have been offered one dose of measles vaccine as children. Those born from the 1990s onwards may have been offered two doses. If you are not sure how many doses you have had, talk to your doctor as the information may be in your medical records. If you cannot demonstrate immunity or have not had two doses, vaccination is recommended, provided you have no contraindications (such as pregnancy). The contraindications and side effects are outlined in the [NZF, Immunisation Handbook](#) and [data sheet](#).

MMR immunisation should be offered to all healthcare workers who have not received two doses of MMR vaccine or who do not have serological evidence of protection for measles, mumps and rubella. For any adult born since 1969 in New Zealand who has received only a single dose of MMR in childhood, a second dose is recommended to achieve full protection, particularly against measles. If two doses of MMR vaccine are required, the second dose should be given four weeks after the initial dose.

For information about protecting patients in the waiting room, see www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/measles-information-health-professionals

NATIONAL HEALTH ADVISORY - ADDENDUM

8 March 2019 - Page 2 of 2

ADDENDUM

Information for the greater Wellington region

Measles cases in the last 3 weeks in New Zealand have been in Dunedin, Christchurch, Rangiora and Auckland. There are no measles cases in the greater Wellington region.

If you suspect measles we advise the following:

- Provide the suspected case with a mask as soon as possible and minimise the time the person spends in shared waiting areas
- Ensure staff use the appropriate PPE
- Ask about overseas travel (particularly Philippines) or visits to Dunedin, Christchurch, Rangiora, Auckland in the **2 weeks** before the onset of rash
- Ask about measles (MMR) immunisation
- The preferred test for measles is pcr of a throat or nasopharyngeal swab. A clean catch urine is an alternative specimen for pcr
- Record the date on rash onset on the laboratory request form
- If measles is suspected NOTIFY Regional Public Health on 04 570 9267 during office hours. After hours notify the on-call Medical Officer of Health on 04 570 9002
- Do not re-use the consultation room for 1 hour after the suspected cases has left