
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:	28 August 2019
Title:	National Health Advisory: Updated advice for measles vaccination

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

Updated advice for measles vaccination

Since June 2019 Auckland has been experiencing an outbreak of measles. There have been over 600 cases to date. Measles is highly infectious and can be life-threatening, but immunisation protects yourself, your family and also helps protect the community.

The Ministry is monitoring the Auckland outbreak closely. People travelling to Auckland, particularly South Auckland, should be immunised against measles before they travel.

Normally, the first measles vaccination occurs at 15 months of age. **However, babies who are travelling to Auckland or living in Auckland should have their first measles vaccine earlier at 12 months of age.** Vaccination should be done at least two weeks before travelling to allow their immunity to develop.

Anyone who may have been in contact with someone with measles should check their vaccination status before they travel. People who have early symptoms of measles (fever, cough, runny nose, sore eyes) should not travel.

After one dose of the MMR vaccine, about 95% of people are protected. Immunisation is the best protection against measles, and it's free. If you are aged under 50 years and have never had at least one dose of a measles vaccine get vaccinated now.

The MMR vaccine can be given to children as young as 6 months old after consultation with your family doctor but the child will still need two more MMR vaccinations when they are older than one year. If you are travelling overseas with your baby to areas with uncontrolled measles outbreaks, or have concerns about their potential exposure to measles you should discuss this with your family doctor.

High immunisation rates protect our whole community from the spread of serious diseases. The best protection for very young children is to ensure that those around them are vaccinated. This means ensuring family members, whanau and carers are vaccinated. We also know that teenagers and young adults are less likely to be protected, so it's really important young people are taking action to protect themselves and those around them.

Further advice and details of countries with measles outbreaks can be found at <https://www.immune.org.nz/hot-topic/measles-overseas-and-new-zealand>.