
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:	24/2/2020
Title:	Ministry of Health Measles Update

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

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Measles outbreak response

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The Ministry of Health would like to thank all DHBs, PHOs, general practices and healthcare staff for the support and ongoing efforts to respond to the national measles outbreak. The outbreak is ongoing but has tapered off significantly, with just seven cases of measles in January 2020. Consequently the Ministry of Health has 'stepped down' the emergency response to this outbreak but will continue to monitor the situation closely. The nationalmeaslescoordination@health.govt.nz email address will continue to be monitored for the next few weeks.

Next steps to increase measles immunisation rates

The Ministry of Health appreciates that many practices will have lists of people who have waited patiently to receive a vaccine. There is now enough MMR vaccine available to vaccinate more broadly.

Under PHARMAC's Pharmaceutical Schedule, a maximum of two doses can be given to any person meeting the following criteria:

1. For primary vaccination in children
2. Revaccination following immunosuppression
3. Any individual susceptible to measles, mumps or rubella (which includes unvaccinated adults under age 50)
4. A maximum of three doses for children who have had their first dose prior to 12 months.

The Ministry of Health ask immunisation service providers to now focus on ensuring infants receive their MMR vaccinations on time and **improving the immunity of 5-14 year olds**. This should include **the active recall of all children in this age range who have not had any MMR vaccination**.

Please also ensure that all MMR doses administered are recorded on the National Immunisation Register (NIR), unless the patient specifically requests it not to be recorded. The measles outbreak highlighted the

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information gap created by the lack of national records for people aged 14 and over and not automatically enrolled on the NIR.

National measles immunisation campaign

A new measles immunisation campaign is scheduled to commence in May 2020. This will be targeted at young adults, aged 15-29, with a focus on Māori and Pacific individuals. PHARMAC has sourced more than 350,000 additional MMR vaccines for the campaign; the vaccines are scheduled to arrive by the end of April 2020. The Ministry will work with DHBs to develop local plans for vaccinating this group to ensure the campaign reaches young adults in their communities.

MMR0 changes in Auckland and beyond

In response to the reduction in case numbers, Auckland Regional Public Health, the three Auckland DHBs and the Ministry of Health have agreed to **discontinue MMR0 for babies aged six to 11 months who live in Auckland or who are travelling to Auckland**. The first dose of MMR (MMR1) will continue to be administered at 12 months in the Auckland region.

As part of **Immunisation Schedule changes in October 2020**, the **first dose of MMR** will move to be administered at **12 months of age** across the rest of New Zealand. At the same time, the **second dose of MMR will move to be administered at 15 months of age**, replacing the current MMR immunisation event at 4 years of age. Further information will follow about this and other changes to the schedule.