

6 September 2019

## **Public health advice for early childhood centres (to centre manager)**

As you know, there is a large and increasing measles outbreak in Auckland with over 800 confirmed cases and over 1,000 cases nationally. There have been 21 cases in the Wellington region this year.

Measles is likely to continue in NZ for months with travel and school holidays increasing the likelihood of further measles spread.

**We are asking you to help us share information** with your staff, parents and community to raise awareness of what people can do now to prevent further spread of the disease.

We encourage staff and parents/caregivers to protect themselves and their children from measles by being fully vaccinated. Due to the increased demand for the MMR vaccine as a result of the current outbreak in Auckland, we advise anyone who is not protected to first check their medical centre's website or phone to see when they will be able to vaccinate you.

It is also important that your community are informed that anybody (staff or child) not known to be immune will be quarantined and excluded should measles occur in your centre.

### **What you can do NOW to protect children and staff at your centre**

#### ***Immunisation Register***

Ensure your Immunisation Register<sup>1</sup> is up to date (these registers are a legal requirement for early childcare education centres). Ensure that you also record the immunisation status of all your **workforce** born after 1/1/1969.

#### ***Messaging for staff and parents - attached as appendices***

Measles will be very disruptive to your centre, it's important to share the below information with your staff and parents or caregivers so they can be prepared and arrange immunisation now if they are not protected.

- A letter for you to share with all staff, parents and caregivers by email (Appendix 3).
- A message you can use on other platforms to communicate with your parents and caregivers i.e., StoryPark or Facebook (Appendix 2).
- Posters to place on centre noticeboards (Appendix 4).

---

<sup>1</sup> All early learning centres, kōhanga reo, primary schools and kura are required to maintain an immunisation register. It's a good idea to have a record of your staff immunisations status. An up-to-date register will make managing quarantine for susceptible people much easier.

## What will happen if there is measles at your centre

If a child or staff member at your centre is diagnosed with measles, you will be contacted by Regional Public Health (RPH) and we will require you to take the following actions:

- Make sure the person with measles does not attend the centre while they are infectious - we will advise on safe return date.
- Quarantine/exclude children/ staff **who do not have evidence** (WellChild book, print out from the GP) **of measles protection** (see appendix 1 for details) for **up to 14 days after their last contact with the infectious person**. RPH will provide the dates for the quarantine period. Note the quarantine period will be extended if there are further cases at the centre.

If a parent informs you of a case of measles in your centre we recommend you make sure that the suspected person is isolated at home and then **check with us** before taking any further action. You do not need to undertake any action unless the case is confirmed by RPH. We are frequently “chasing rumours” of measles (or other notifiable diseases) and would prefer to ensure the illness is confirmed (or at least probable) before disrupting your operations and alerting your community.

## Further resources

- Important health information and measles preparedness can be found at: [www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/early-childhood-centres/current-illnesses/measles/](http://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/early-childhood-centres/current-illnesses/measles/)
- Further information and resources including posters can be found at: [www.rph.org.nz/measles/](http://www.rph.org.nz/measles/)
- For information on measles see: Ministry of Health – [www.health.govt.nz/measles](http://www.health.govt.nz/measles) or Health Navigator – <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/m/measles/>

You can contact RPH for further advice if required on 04 570 9002.

Thank you for your help in reducing the impact of measles in your community.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Annette Nesdale**  
Medical Officer of Health  
Greater Wellington Region

## Appendix 1. UPDATED advice on measles protection and immunisation

### Check here to see if children are protected:

AGE	PROTECTED?
0-6 months of age	May have some protection from their mother from pregnancy and during breast-feeding.
6 months to 12 months	Not protected - but can be vaccinated early if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If travelling to a high risk country overseas.</li> <li>• Specific risks identified after discussion with their GP</li> </ul> NOTE: The child will still need another 2 doses of MMR after 12 months of age.
12 to 15 months	Not protected. <b>NEW ADVICE-</b> If traveling to Auckland it is <b>recommended to have the 15 month immunisations (includes the 1<sup>st</sup> measles vaccine) early from 12 months of age.</b>
15 months until 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday	One documented dose of MMR = fully immunised for age.
4 years to 19 years	Two documented doses of MMR = fully immunised for age.

### Check here to see if an adult is protected:

YEAR BORN	PROTECTED?	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Born before 1 January 1969 in NZ	Yes, assumed protected as measles was common in NZ at this time.	No action required.
Born between 1969 and 1980 (inclusive) in NZ	Probably not – received only 1 measles vaccine which may have been given at 10 months of age when less effective.	Get a second MMR vaccine.
Born between 1981 to 1990 (inclusive)	Protected if you had two measles vaccines.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.
Born between 1991-1996 in NZ	People born 1991 to 1996 may not have had a second measles vaccine. This was when the second measles vaccine (MMR) was changed from 11 years to 4 years. Children aged five to 10 years at this time were offered catch up MMR vaccine through schools, but uptake and coverage was not high.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.
Born in NZ from 1 January 1997	Protected if you have had two measles vaccines – usually given at 12-15 months and then at four years.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.

## **Appendix 2 - Messaging for schools to send out e.g., Facebook, StoryPark, Website:**

### **Important information about Measles – public health advice for all parents**

We have received important information from Regional Public Health regarding the measles outbreak and steps we need to take to protect our school community. Please read the information found on the below links.

*Link to letter to parents.* <http://www.rph.org.nz/measles>

*Link to RPH website with fact sheets, posters etc* <http://www.rph.org.nz/measles>

*Link to Ministry of Health –* [www.health.govt.nz/measles](http://www.health.govt.nz/measles)

## Appendix 3

Template letter for staff and parents/caregivers

### Measles – important information from Regional Public Health (RPH)

As you know, there is a large and increasing measles outbreak in Auckland with over 800 confirmed cases and over 900 cases nationally. There have been 21 cases in the Wellington region this year.

Measles is likely to continue in NZ for months with travel and school holidays increasing the likelihood of further measles spread.

Safeguarding your children from measles by being fully vaccinated, keeping children and staff who are not protected away if measles occurs at your centre will all help protect others, especially those at risk of complications from disease.

### To protect your child and their centre RPH recommends the following actions NOW

- Check the table below to see if you and your whanau are protected from measles.
- If you are travelling to Auckland, especially South Auckland make sure you are vaccinated. This advice NOW includes babies aged 12-15 months who are recommended to have their first measles vaccine early before going to Auckland.
- If you are not vaccinated we advise you to check your medical centre's website or phone to see when they will be able to vaccinate you. The current measles outbreak in Auckland has led to an increased demand for the MMR vaccine.
- Talk to your doctor if you are travelling overseas; especially if you have babies aged 6-12 months.
- Provide a copy of your child's immunisation records to your centre when asked. This information can be found:
  - a. Wellchild book
  - b. Asking your medical centre for a printout of your/ your child's immunisations
  - c. For children aged 0 to 14 years **the parent can email [RES-NIR@huttvalleydhb.org.nz](mailto:RES-NIR@huttvalleydhb.org.nz)** and ask for a copy of your child's National Immunisation Register record. We will need the child's NHI number (if known), full name, date of birth, including mum's first and last name. This will ensure we get the correct record if there are children with similar names born on the same day.
- If your children are NOT protected from measles start thinking about alternative arrangements if there is confirmed measles at your centre. Children who are not protected CANNOT attend the centre or social events for up to 14 days after their last contact with the infectious person. This date will be extended if there are further cases in the centre.

Measles will be very disruptive to the centre community and we want parents/caregivers and children to be prepared and protected – either by having your immunisation records ready or immunising now if you are not protected.

You can contact Regional Public Health for further advice if required on 04 570 9002.

Thank you for your help in reducing the impact of measles in your community.

## Check here to see if children are protected:

AGE	PROTECTED?
0-6 months of age	Too young to be vaccinated, may have some protection from their mother from pregnancy and breast feeding.
6 months to 12 months	Not protected - but can be vaccinated early if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travelling to a high risk country overseas.</li> <li>• Specific risks identified after discussion with their doctor</li> </ul> NOTE: The child will still need another 2 doses of MMR after 12 months of age.
12 to 15 months	Not protected. <b>NEW ADVICE</b> - If traveling to Auckland it is <b>recommended to have the 15 month immunisations (includes the 1<sup>st</sup> measles vaccine) early from 12 months of age.</b>
15 months until 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday	One documented dose of MMR = fully immunised for age.
4 years to 19 years	Two documented doses of MMR = fully immunised for age.

## Check here to see if an adult is protected:

YEAR BORN?	PROTECTED?	RECOMMENDED ACTION?
Born before 1 January 1969 in NZ	Yes, assumed protected as measles was common in NZ at this time.	No action required.
Born between 1969 and 1980 (inclusive) in NZ	Probably not – received only 1 measles vaccine which may have been given at 10 months of age when less effective.	Get a second MMR vaccine.
Born between 1981 to 1990 (inclusive)	Protected if you had two measles vaccines.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.
Born between 1991-1996 in NZ	People born 1991 to 1996 may not have had a second measles vaccine. This was when the second measles vaccine (MMR) was changed from 11 years to 4 years. Children aged five to 10 years at this time were offered catch up MMR vaccine through schools, but uptake and coverage was not high.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.
Born in NZ from 1 January 1997	Protected if you have had two measles vaccines – usually given at 12-15 months and then at four years.	Check if you have had two measles vaccines. If in doubt, get a second MMR vaccine.

## Appendix 4: Posters

# Measles

It isn't just a little rash

Measles can be dangerous, especially for **babies, children and pregnant women.**

## Measles symptoms typically include:

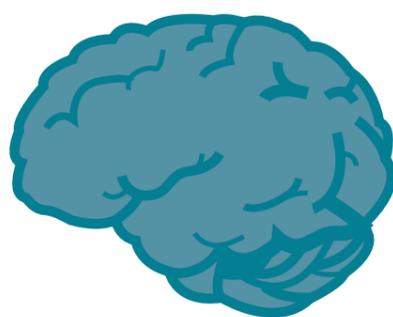
- High fever (may spike to more than 40°C)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Rash may develop 3-5 days after symptoms begin



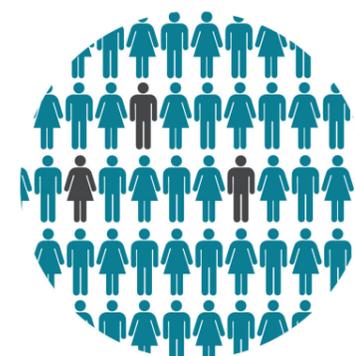
## Measles can be life threatening:



1 out of 3 people who get measles may be hospitalised.



1 out of every 1,000 people with measles may develop brain swelling which may lead to brain damage.



1 out of 1,000 people with measles may die from complications.

**You can protect your children with vaccination.  
Talk to your GP or practice nurse.**

# Measles

## Top 3 things parents need to know about measles

An unprotected (or unvaccinated) child can get measles when travelling overseas and also at home in New Zealand.

This is a list of some of the most important facts you need to know about measles.

### Measles can be serious.



Some people think of measles as just a little rash and fever that clears up in a few days, but measles can cause serious health complications, especially in children younger than 5 years of age. There is no way to tell in advance the severity of the symptoms your child will experience.

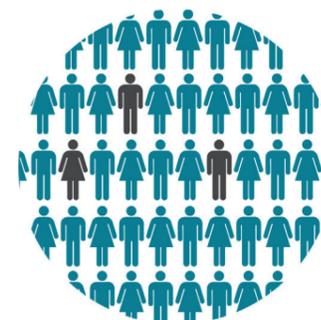
- 1 out of 3 people who get measles may be hospitalised.
- 1 out of every 1,000 people with measles may develop brain swelling which may lead to brain damage.
- 1 out of 1,000 people with measles may die from complications.

Some of the more common measles symptoms include:

- High fever (may spike to more than 40°C)
- Cough
- Runny nose (corzya)
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Rash (3 – 5 days after symptoms begin)

### Measles is very contagious.

Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 9 out of 10 people around them will also become infected if they are not protected. Your child can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, even up to one hour after that person has left. An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing they have the disease.



### You can protect your child against measles with a safe and effective vaccine.

The best protection against measles is the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. *Two doses of MMR vaccine provide the best protection:*

- The first dose at 15 months of age
- The second dose at 4 years of age

### Travelling to Auckland

NEW ADVICE: it is recommended that babies 12–15 months **travelling to Auckland** have their MMR early.

### Travelling overseas

People with babies 6–12 months travelling overseas to countries with large measles outbreak should talk to their doctor about early vaccination.