



Young adults measles program (born after 1960)

What is measles?

Measles is a very contagious viral illness with more than 90% of non-immune people becoming infected if exposed. Measles can cause serious illness and hospitalisation can occur from complications such as pneumonia or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

How can I get measles?

Measles is spread by airborne droplets from the coughs and sneezes of people with measles infection. In Australia most measles infection originates from returned overseas travellers or from foreign visitors who can then spread the infection to non-immune individuals.

What can measles do?

Measles causes fever, cough, watery eyes, runny nose and a red, blotchy rash all over the face and body.

A person with measles:

- is very infectious and can infect others from just before the onset of the first symptoms to 4 days after the appearance of the rash
- is generally too unwell to return to work for 1 to 3 weeks



Why are persons born after 1960 at risk of getting measles?

To be fully immune against measles you need to have had the infection or have had 2 measles vaccinations after 1979.



People born after 1960 may not be fully protected against measles because:

For further information

- ask your immunisation provider, doctor
- phone your state/territory's immunisation unit
- visit a website

- they were vaccinated before 1979
- they are unlikely to have had measles infection

Other age groups are protected because:

- most people born since 1983 have been fully immunised against measles
- people born before 1960 are likely to have had measles infection

How can measles be prevented?

A combined measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine prevents measles in 95% of people vaccinated and also gives protection against mumps and rubella.

Should everyone born after 1960 have the MMR vaccine?

All adults born after 1960 should have a total of 2 MMR vaccines unless they have documented evidence of immunity to measles (ie pathology report).

You should not have the MMR vaccine if:

- you are currently pregnant or plan to be pregnant within 2 months of vaccination
- you have had a severe reaction to previous measles, mumps or rubella vaccines.

Where can I go to receive a free MMR vaccine?

The free vaccine is available from your community health centre and most general practitioners.

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au>
<http://www.cdc.gov/nip>
<http://www.nfid.org/factsheets/>
<http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/facts.html>



Comparison of the risks of the diseases measles, mumps, rubella, and the risks of the MMR vaccine

Effects of Disease

Side Effects of Vaccine

<p>Measles Infection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes rash, flu-like symptoms, fever and irritability • Middle ear infection (2.5 in 100 people infected) • Pneumonia (4 in 100 people infected) • Inflammation of the brain, encephalitis, (1 in 2000 people infected). For every 10 people who get measles encephalitis, one will die and up to 4 will have permanent brain damage • Brain degeneration, Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), may occur 7 years after infection and is fatal. (1 in 25,000 people infected) 	<p>Measles component of MMR vaccine</p> <p>Reactions usually occur 7-10 days after immunisation and are much less frequent than natural measles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 1 in 10 people will feel slightly unwell and have local inflammation at injection site and fever • About 1 in 100 people may get a rash due to the vaccine (not infectious) • SSPE does <u>not</u> occur following immunisation • 1 in 1 million people vaccinated may develop encephalitis after MMR vaccine
<p>Mumps Infection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes swollen salivary glands • One in 200 of infected people may develop encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) • One in 5 males past puberty may develop inflammation of the testicles • Occasionally mumps can cause infertility or deafness • Other organs can also be effected including the pancreas, ovaries (in women), liver, heart and thyroid gland 	<p>Mumps component of MMR vaccine</p> <p>Reactions usually occur 7-10 days after immunisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 in 100 people may get swollen salivary glands. • 1 in 3 million people may get mild encephalitis (brain inflammation)
<p>Rubella Infection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mild illness with fever and rash • 5 in 10 people infected may develop a rash, painful neck and joints or swollen glands • 9 in 10 unborn babies whose mothers are infected during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy will have a congenital abnormality; deafness, blindness, brain damage or heart defects. Other organs can also be affected by complications including the liver, lungs and bone marrow. • 1 in 3000 people have bruising or bleeding disorder • 1 in 6000 may develop brain inflammation 	<p>Rubella component of MMR vaccine</p> <p>Reactions usually occur 7-10 days after immunisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 1 in 10 people will have discomfort, local inflammation, or fever • About 1 in 100 people may get a rash due to the vaccine (not infectious). • About 1 in 20 people vaccinated may get swollen glands (behind the ears), stiff neck and joint pains (temporary) • 1 in 30,500 may have bruising or bleeding disorder (temporary)

Reference: NHRMC (2003) *Australian immunisation handbook*, 8th Edition

For more information contact your nearest Centre for Disease Control.

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