

# Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

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Dear Parent or Guardian

## Measles outbreak – information for parents and guardians August 2009

The Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) is currently receiving an increase in the number of notifications of measles, a serious and highly infectious viral disease that causes fever, cough, sore red eyes and a rash.

Measles can make children and adults very sick. It can lead to hospitalisation and in rare cases can be fatal.

Immunisation against measles is the only protection.

Please check your child's immunisation records in their Tamariki Ora Health Book or call your GP.

The Ministry of Health recommends all children from age 12 months to 12 years who have not had one dose of the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine should receive this as soon as possible.

All children should be watched for symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose, sore red eyes, and a rash. If this occurs please:

- Call your GP or Healthline on 0800 611 116 as soon as possible for advice.
- Keep your child home until they are well again.
- Your GP will advise the safest time for your child to return to school.

More information is available on [www.arphs.govt.nz/measles](http://www.arphs.govt.nz/measles)

Yours sincerely

Dr Brad Novak  
Medical Officer of Health  
Auckland Regional Public Health Service

# Fact sheet: Measles outbreak – information for parents and guardians August 2009

## What is measles and why is there an outbreak of measles?

- Measles is a serious and highly infectious viral disease that can make people very sick.
- One in 10 people who get measles will end up in hospital and, in rare cases, it can be fatal.
- Measles is easily passed from one person to another through coughing and sneezing.
- The percentage of 18 month old children who have received their first dose of the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is low at 72% in the greater Auckland region.
- Low rates of immunisation mean that we are now seeing a rise in the number of people, not just young children, becoming ill with measles.
- The only way to protect your child against measles is by ensuring they have had at least one dose of the MMR vaccine.

## What happens if my child gets measles?

- The early symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, sore red eyes and white spots inside the mouth. After 3 to 5 days a rash appears on the head and then moves down the body.
- Some cases develop more serious complications like ear infection and pneumonia.
- All children should be watched for symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose, sore red eyes, and a rash. If this occurs please:
  - Call your GP or Healthline on 0800 611 116 as soon as possible for advice.
  - Keep your child at home until they are well again.
  - Your GP will advise the safest time for your child to return to school.

## What is the risk of my child getting the measles?

- If your child has not had at least one dose of the MMR vaccine they are at risk of becoming ill with measles.
- If you are not sure of your child's immunisation records please check your child's Tamariki Ora Health Book or call your GP.

## What should I do if my child has come into contact with someone with measles?

- If your child is not immunised with at least one dose of the MMR vaccine, please get your child immunised as soon as possible. It is free. Your child may also be advised to stay away from school and public places for 14 days to ensure they do not pass the measles to other people.
- If your child is immunised they do not need to be isolated and can carry on with normal activities like going to school.

**The only thing that can stop your child becoming ill with measles is getting them immunised. If you suspect your child is sick with measles call your GP or Healthline on 0800 611 116. For more information on measles please go to [www.arphs.govt.nz/measles](http://www.arphs.govt.nz/measles).**

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