

2019 measles outbreak information

Last updated 5.05 pm, 11 September 2019

On this page you will find information on immunisation, vaccine guidelines, travelling and more:

Information for parents, whānau and caregivers

Please contact your GP if you have a child who falls into one of priority groups for vaccinations. Our priority is:

- ensuring all children across NZ receive their vaccines on time at 15 months (12 months of age in Auckland) and 4 years to maintain the national childhood immunisation schedule.
- vaccinating groups who are most affected by the outbreak in the Auckland area, namely children under 4 years of age, those aged 15-29 years and Pacific peoples.
- children aged up to 14 years who have not had a single dose of vaccine to get vaccinated.

Speak to your GP if you have concerns.

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Case numbers

From 1 January 2019 to 11 September 2019 there have been 1172 confirmed cases of measles notified across New Zealand. 970 of these confirmed cases are in the Auckland region.

Symptoms

The symptoms of measles include:

- Fever
- Cough

- Runny nose
- Sore and watery 'pink eyes'
- Rash

If you catch measles, you can infect others from five days before the rash appears until five days after the rash disappears. The virus is highly contagious and spreads easily from person to person through the air.

If you or a family member suspect you have measles you should stay at home and call your doctor or Healthline on [0800 611 116](tel:0800611116). If you have measles, it's really important to limit spreading it to others, so avoid waiting rooms and please stay at home.

Immunisation and prevention

Immunisation is the best way to protect against getting measles. Measles (MMR) vaccination is free to everyone under the age of 50 and 99 percent effective after two doses.

Children in New Zealand normally get the MMR vaccine at 15 months and 4 years old as part of the national vaccine schedule.

The Ministry has **two priorities**:

- **to vaccinate all children on time**
- **to ensure that the groups most affected by the outbreak get vaccinations, particularly children under 4 years old and those between 15 and 29 years old.**

There are drop-in vaccination clinics around the Auckland region.

Visit the [Counties Manukau DHB Measles](#) webpage for dates and times.

Local vaccination clinics

There are drop-in vaccination clinics around the Auckland region. For dates and times, visit the [Counties Manukau DHB Measles](#) webpage. It will have the latest information on where and when people can get vaccinated.

The [Counties Manukau DHB Measles](#) webpage.

Measles and pregnancy

Pregnant women should not get immunised against measles. If you're pregnant and think you may have measles or have come in contact with someone with measles, you should call your general practice, lead maternity carer or Healthline on [0800 611 116](tel:0800611116) as soon as possible.

Advice for infants

Infants under 12 months old are best protected if family members, whānau and carers have had their vaccinations.

Infants 12–15 months old who live in the Auckland region are eligible for the first dose of the free MMR vaccine immediately.

Infants 12–15 months old who will be travelling to the Auckland region should be taken to a clinic for a free dose of the MMR vaccine at least two weeks before travelling to build immunity.

Infants who do not live in the Auckland region and do not plan to travel there should receive the first dose of MMR vaccine at 15 months old as usual.

Infants aged 6 to 15 months travelling overseas should receive an early dose of the MMR vaccine at least two weeks before travelling to a country with an active measles outbreak. This includes a number of countries and regions, including Hong Kong, the United States and Canada, as well as parts of Europe and Southeast Asia.

To find out if your family's intended destination is dealing with a measles outbreak, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Destinations tool](#).

Infants who get an MMR vaccine before their first birthday will still need the usual doses at 15 months and 4 years to ensure full immunity.

Advice for those between 15 and 29 years old

If you are between the ages of 15 and 29, you should check your immunisation records to make sure you received two doses of the MMR vaccine as a child. If you didn't receive two doses, or can't confirm whether you did or not, you should visit a clinic for a free measles vaccine.

Advice for those over 50

Because measles used to be very common, people over the age of 50 are considered immune and don't need an immunisation.

Measles at schools

Children who have not been immunised or who are immunocompromised should stay away from schools where measles cases have been reported.

The local Medical Officer of Health can direct individual students who are at risk of transmitting measles to stay at home and will announce when it's safe to return to the school. School principals can also issue these directions themselves after consulting with Medical Officers of Health.

Mass gatherings and events

At this stage the Ministry does not recommend event organisers cancel events such as concerts, sports events, festivals or other public congregations. However, we suggest organisers work closely with their local DHBs and Public Health Units for the latest advice.

- [Auckland Regional Public Health Service - Measles outbreak in Auckland](#)

Travelling internationally

With school holidays almost here, it's important to make sure you're immunised two weeks before travelling to international destinations with measles outbreaks. Getting vaccinated at least two weeks before you go allows the immunity to develop.

Those who aren't immune and have early symptoms of measles (fever, cough, runny nose, sore eyes or a rash) should not travel.

Currently, significant outbreaks have been reported in Hong Kong, the United States and Canada, as well as parts of Europe and Southeast Asia. Australia has experienced regular cases of measles for a number of years. Since 2012, all cases of measles in New Zealand have originated from travellers bringing the disease from overseas, so it's important to take precautions before you go.

If you have friends or relations visiting from countries with an active measles outbreak, you might want to suggest that they check their immunisation records with their family doctor before travelling.

Infants aged 6–15 months who are travelling to countries where there are serious measles outbreaks should get the MMR vaccine before leaving. You can vaccinate infants as young as 6 months after consultation with your family doctor, but your child will still need two more doses of the MMR vaccine between the ages of 1 and 4 years old.

If you are between the ages of 15 and 29, you should check your immunisation records to make sure you received two doses of the MMR vaccine as a child. If you didn't receive two doses, or can't confirm whether you did or not, you should visit a clinic for a free measles vaccine.

People over the age of 50 are considered immune and don't need an immunisation because measles used to be very common.

Please check out these handy international travel websites:

- [Safe Travel](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#)

Travelling to Auckland

With school holidays almost here, it's important to make sure you're immunised two weeks before travelling to Auckland. Getting vaccinated at least two weeks before you go allows the immunity to develop.

Those who aren't immune or who have early symptoms of measles (fever, cough, runny nose, sore eyes or a rash) should not travel.

At this stage, the Ministry does not recommend that infants under 12 months old get an additional early dose of the MMR vaccine for travel to Auckland.

National Health Coordination Centre

The Ministry of Health activated the National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC) on Friday 30 August 2019 to manage the response to the Auckland outbreak. Activating the NHCC means that an Incident Management Team has been established to coordinate within the NHCC.