



Measles | Check your children are protected before the school holidays

Measles is a serious illness with one in three people with measles developing other complications. Last week there was a worrying increase in the number of measles cases in the Waikato region, with a large outbreak of 53 cases at Fraser High School and cases at other schools in Hamilton. There have been 182 measles cases in New Zealand this year; 33 of these people had to go to hospital. There are **no** cases of measles in the Wellington region at the moment.

Before people develop the measles rash they are very infectious and can pass the illness on to others. Outbreaks of measles in other regions of New Zealand could start quickly. Parents should be mindful that travel to and from Wellington in the July school holidays could mean families and children are in contact with measles, especially if:

- people are traveling to Auckland and Waikato, or have children from these areas coming to stay
- your child is involved in inter- school sports tournaments and events or going to ski fields
- you are planning travel to Vietnam or the Philippines where there are on-going measles outbreaks.

Immunisation

Immunisation is the best protection to stop you and your children getting measles. It takes 10 to 14 days from immunisation for you to be protected. To be fully immunised against measles you need two vaccinations. Unimmunised people are most at risk, schools in Waikato that have measles cases have asked children who have not had two doses of measles vaccine to stay off school until the outbreak is controlled.

We recommend that the following people contact their family doctor to confirm that they have had two doses of the measles vaccine:

- People born between 1996 to 1991 (now aged 18 to 23yrs). This was the time the immunisation schedule changed from 11 years to 4 years, children aged 5 to 10 at this time were offered catch up vaccines through schools, not all children received these.
- Children more than 4 years of age. You can also check their Wellchild book to confirm they have had two doses of the vaccine. If not, we recommend getting your child vaccinated now, the vaccine is free.
- If you are unsure if you are vaccinated against measles.

The following groups of people are regarded as **not** immune to measles:

- People younger than 45 years old (born after 01 January 1969) who have not had two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine after 12 months of age or have **not** had a laboratory confirmed positive measles result.
- Children over four years old who have not received their second dose of MMR.
- Infants under the age of 15 months who have not received their first routine dose of MMR vaccine. They are susceptible and rely on everyone else to be immune so that measles does not spread to them.

There is still time to get yourself and your children immunised before the school holidays. **Please read the attached factsheet for more information on measles and immunisation.**