

NORTHLAND DHB PUBLIC HEALTH
JULY 1, 2014

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MEASLES

Measles is spreading around the North Island, after an outbreak in Hamilton. A person with measles in Hawkes Bay was recently visited by people living in Northland, and it is probably only a matter of time before measles spreads north.

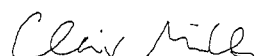
Measles is VERY infectious - and if you are not immune, there is a high chance you will get sick. Measles can be a very serious illness, with one in three sufferers experiencing complications such as ear infections, pneumonia, bronchitis or diarrhoea. About one in ten people will be admitted to hospital.

The best protection is to have measles vaccination. If you have not had confirmed measles illness in the past, or you have not received **TWO** doses of MMR or measles containing vaccine, you cannot be sure to be protected. Immunisation protects not only the individual, but also stops the spread of this disease within our communities.

In Northland, MMR vaccine coverage has not been very high for many years, and older children, teenagers and young adults, as well as young children under 15 months (that is, not yet old enough to receive the vaccine) are most at risk.

If you are exposed to someone who has measles and you are not immune, you will be asked to self-quarantine for up to 14 days after exposure. As this is highly disruptive to families and school holiday plans, **I strongly recommend MMR vaccination for all school students who have not received two doses.**

PLEASE SEE YOUR GP OR PRACTICE NURSE- VACCINATION IS FREE



Dr Clair Mills
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FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MEASLES:

What is measles?

- Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that can be very serious.
- It is spread from person to person through the air by breathing, sneezing or coughing. Just being in the same room as someone with measles can lead to infection if you are not immune.

Who is at risk of measles infection?

People are at risk of getting measles if they are not immune to measles. People who are regarded as not immune to measles are:

- **People younger than 45 years old** (born after 01 January 1969) who have **not had two doses** of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine
- **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.
- **Children over four years old who have not received their second dose of MMR.**

What should you do?

- Ensure you/your child are up to date with your immunisations.
- If you/your child are not immune it is important to be aware of the symptoms of measles. The early symptoms of measles are fever, runny nose, sore red eyes and cough.
- After 3-5 days a red, blotchy rash appears on the face and head and then spreads down the body.

If you develop symptoms of measles:

- Stay at home and away from public places (such as sports events, gatherings, parties, school, work, child care, shopping centres, public transport and so on).
- See your doctor as soon as possible so a diagnosis can be confirmed. However, phone the surgery ahead to alert them of your symptoms and to allow them to make arrangements to assess you safely and without infecting other people.
- If you are unable to visit your GP phone Healthline on 0800 611 116.