

Measles: information for contacts

Contacts are people who shared the same air as someone who was infectious with measles. Some contacts who are not immune may go on to develop the infection unless they get preventive treatment

Note to health care professionals:

- Information on this factsheet should be completed by a health care professional for each patient (exposure date, indicate if given MMR or NHIG, and practice stamp).
- A NSW Health measles factsheet should also be given to the contact:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/measles.html

1. Date of contact with the infectious person: _____

2. Watch out for symptoms of measles until: _____

3. You have been given the following treatment to prevent measles:

Measles , mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine after measles exposure

MMR vaccine can make the body produce antibodies against measles and can protect against the disease developing if it is given within 72 hours after exposure to the virus. MMR vaccine is not suitable for everyone. Pregnant women and immunosuppressed people should not get MMR.

Normal Human Immunoglobulin (NHIG) injection after measles exposure

Normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG) is antibodies purified from blood donors. NHIG can provide short-term protection against infection if given within 7 days of exposure. NHIG does not provide long-term protection. MMR is recommended but should be delayed for 5 months after receiving NHIG.

No treatment after measles exposure

If exposure to measles occurred more than 7 days ago, MMR and NHIG are not effective. You should be on the lookout for the symptoms of measles.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CONTACTS

What is a measles contact?

“Contacts” are people who shared the same air as someone while they were infectious with measles (for example, being in the same room as someone with measles). If the infection is transferred to contacts who are not immune, they may develop measles symptoms in 7 to 18 days after sharing the same air.

Many contacts will be immune to measles because of past measles infection or immunisation and will not get the disease. Other contacts who are not immune may get infected and may then go on to spread the virus to others. It is sometimes possible to stop the infection in non-immune people – either by giving MMR vaccine or by giving an injection of normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG).

Who is at risk of measles infection?

Measles was common before 1966, so most people born before then are immune.

People at risk of measles include:

- people born during or since 1966 who have never had measles and who have not had two doses of MMR vaccine from the age of 12 months.

- people with a weak immune system (e.g., people who are receiving chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancer or people who take high-dose steroid medications) even if they have been fully immunised or have had past measles infection.

What should contacts do?

- Look out for the symptoms of measles until the date written on the front of this sheet. The first symptoms of measles are fever, runny nose, sore runny eyes and cough. The rash starts later.
- As a precaution, it's a good idea to limit contact with anyone who is at risk of measles until 18 days after you were exposed. If you are unable to limit contact with these people you should warn them that you may be infectious.

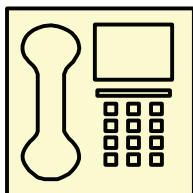
If you (or your child) develops symptoms of measles

- Do not attend public places (such as work, school, child care or shopping centres) or use public transport.
- See a doctor, preferably your general practitioner, as soon as possible so a diagnosis can be confirmed. Take this fact sheet along with you.
- Call 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.
- Call the public health unit on the number below.

For more information

- A general measles fact sheet is available at:
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/measles.html>

Further information - Public Health Units in NSW



1300 066 055

www.health.nsw.gov.au