



To Principals, Head Teachers and Boards of Trustees

Measles update

We have recently had confirmed cases of measles in the Waikato Region.

Thus we thought it timely, based on previous experience, to take this opportunity to remind schools, preschools and parents of the signs and symptoms of the disease and also the process that would need to be put in place in a school or preschool if there were infectious cases.

What is measles?

- Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that can be 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.
- The first symptoms of measles are a fever, and one or more of a runny nose, cough and sore red eyes. After a few days a red blotchy rash comes on and lasts up to one week. The rash usually starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Measles can be very serious.

Students and teachers with measles are infectious from 5 days before to 5 days after the onset of rash and must stay away from school and follow the advice of the local Medical Officer of Health.

If there is a case of confirmed measles at the school/preschool

We will contact your school/preschool if a confirmed case is identified as being from your school. The following action will then be required.

Who can remain at school?

All students would be required to show documented evidence of 2 MMR or measles vaccines either from a copy of a sighted Child Health 'Plunket' book or vaccine information provided by a GP to remain at school/preschool. They are thought to be immune.

It is recommended that teachers should also follow this practice. Anyone born after 1 January 1969 should ensure they are fully immunised against measles. If they are unsure, they can check with their family doctor.

Who has to be off school in quarantine?

- Students at the school/preschool of a measles case who have not been fully immunised (2 doses of MMR or measles vaccine) or those with no immunity to measles, and who have been in close contact with a measles case during the infectious stages must stay away from school/preschool for 14 days from their last contact at the direction of the local Medical Officer of Health.

- If your child has only had one documented MMR vaccine then they can have their second MMR vaccine (as long as greater than one month from the first) and immediately return to school/preschool.
- These are requirements under the Health (Infectious and Notifiable Diseases) Regulations 1966 (Regulation 14). These exclusions also apply to staff and students taking part in interschool sporting and other events.

It is recommended that to help schools/preschools in the case of measles case(s), all parents, if not already actioned; provide documented information regarding 2 doses of MMR to the school/preschool over the next few weeks.

- If possible, when seeking documentation from general practice regarding your child's 2 documented doses of MMR to provide to the school/preschool, could you please ask them to state clearly that 2 documented doses of MMR have been given, and not just immunised for age.
- For overseas students or where vaccination documentation is from overseas then if possible please get your general practice to sight these to clarify that you have received 2 documented doses of MMR or measles vaccine. Also please ask for them to also state clearly where appropriate that **2 doses of MMR or measles vaccine have been given**. Thanks, this will help the school who are sighting the relevant vaccination documentation.

It is recommended that all schools/preschools revisit and update their immunisation register.

Parents must have provided documented evidence of two MMR or measles vaccines to be fully immunised against measles.

What should you do today?

- Ensure your child is up to date with their immunisations.
- If your child is not fully immunised and thus is 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.

If you or your child develops symptoms of measles:

- Phone your GP or call Healthline on 0800 611 116 for advice or seek medical attention depending on severity of illness. It is important to call first because measles is highly infectious, and people with measles can infect others in the waiting room.
- 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).

Further information

If you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Population Health (**07 838 2569**) or visit **Waikato DHB website:**

<http://www.waikatodhb.health.nz/measles/>

Kind regards



Dr Richard Wall
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