



# Important Information About Measles, Mumps and Rubella Diseases and the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine

## ? What is measles?

- It is a severe, highly contagious illness caused by a virus and can affect both children and adults.
- It can cause a rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes lasting 1 to 2 weeks.
- It may lead to ear infections and pneumonia.
- It may result in may result in inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) which occurs in about one in 1,000 people and may result in seizures or permanent hearing loss.
- It can be a life-threatening disease.
- It is preventable by immunization.

## ? What is mumps?

- It is a severe, highly contagious illness caused by a virus and can affect both children and adults.
- It causes fever, headache and inflammation of the salivary glands. This causes the cheeks to swell.
- It may cause painful swelling of the testicles or abdominal pain.
- It may cause inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), encephalitis or permanent hearing loss.
- It is preventable by immunization.

## ? What is rubella?

- It is a severe, highly contagious illness caused by a virus and can affect both children and adults.
- It is also called German measles.
- It can cause fever, rash and swelling of nodes in the neck which lasts about 3 days.
- It may result in swelling and aching of the joints which lasts for a week or two.
- It may lead to a temporary bleeding disorder (purpura).
- It can cause encephalitis.
- It can cause deformities of the unborn child, if rubella occurs during pregnancy.
- It is preventable by immunization.

## ? What is the MMR vaccine?

- The MMR vaccine is one vaccine which protects against measles, mumps, and rubella.
- The MMR vaccine contains a tiny amount of live virus that is specially treated so that it won't cause disease.
- Immunization with the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent measles, mumps and rubella.
- The vaccine is given by injection.
- Two doses are required for full protection.

## ? Who should receive the MMR vaccine?

Infants (6 to 11 months):

- If planning to travel anywhere internationally, one dose of MMR vaccine may be given.
- The child will still need two routine doses of MMRV (MMR with varicella [chickenpox] vaccine) after their first birthday.

Children and Youth (1 to 17 years):

- Two doses of MMRV are normally given at 12 and 18 months.
- Older children and youth are eligible for two catch-up doses if childhood vaccines were missed.

Adults (18 to 55 years, born in 1970 or later):

- Adults born between 1970 and 1995 were offered only one dose as children and another dose is recommended.
- Adults born in 1996 or later were offered 2 doses as children. If two doses were received, they are fully vaccinated.
- Adults are eligible for up to two catch-up doses if childhood vaccines were missed.

Older Adults (55+ years, born in 1969 or earlier):

- Older adults are generally considered immune, but can get a single dose if travelling anywhere internationally.

Some people should check with a healthcare provider before they receive this vaccine:

- People whose immune systems are weakened because of disease or certain medications.
- Anyone who has received any blood product within the preceding 3–11 months.

*Please read other side.*



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### **? Who should NOT receive the MMR vaccine?**

- Children less than 6 months of age.
- This vaccine is not recommended for pregnant people. If a person wishes to get any of these vaccines, they should ideally wait at least one month before getting pregnant.
- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of the MMR vaccine.
- If not receiving the combination MMR and Varicella (MMRV) vaccine, the MMR and varicella vaccines can be given at the same time. If not given on the same day, there should be four weeks between receiving each vaccine.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

**People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.**

### **? What are the possible side effects from the MMR vaccine?**

- As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.
- A fever, rash, sore throat and headache may occur about 5–12 days after the vaccination, and may last 1–2 days.
- Rarely, pain and/or swelling of the testicle(s) may occur.

**As fever may occur, make sure you have acetaminophen or ibuprofen at home. Follow the instructions that come with the product. Talk to your healthcare provider before using either of these medications as they are not recommended for people with certain medical conditions.**

#### **Call your healthcare provider if:**

- A fever lasts longer than 24 hours.
- A fever is 38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher.
- A fever doesn't come down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen are taken.
- A seizure occurs.
- Other illness or symptoms occur.

### **? Questions?**

If you have any questions about measles, mumps, or rubella disease or the MMR vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: [www.nshealth.ca/public-health](http://www.nshealth.ca/public-health)) or your healthcare provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the following websites:

**Nova Scotia Health Public Health**  
[www.nshealth.ca/immunizations](http://www.nshealth.ca/immunizations)

**Immunize Canada**  
[immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca)

**Public Health Agency of Canada**  
[www.canada.ca/public-health](http://www.canada.ca/public-health)

**Canadian Paediatric Society**  
[cps.ca](http://cps.ca)

**811**  
[811.novascotia.ca](http://811.novascotia.ca)