

29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Kia ora koutou

**Please share this information with your networks, members, or providers**

A second unrelated measles case has been identified in Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland in the last 7 days after recent travel abroad. No exposure events have been identified outside of Tāmaki Makaurau and all close contacts are being followed up. However, please maintain clinical vigilance for potential measles. Isolate on suspicion and notify your local public health service immediately. HealthPathways has up-to-date information on this topic – please visit to check your local protocol.

Please prioritise MMR vaccination activity in practices (recall and opportunistic). Māori and Pacific infants are highest priority populations.

Included below are links to resources to help you to inform your communities and whānau. Also below are patient focused FAQs you may want to share through your practice communications channels.

Due to school holidays and travel between regions, there is potential for cases to present in other parts of the motu. For your information, and when assessing a visiting patient, the latest identified case was at the following locations in Tāmaki Makaurau on these dates:

1. *Busy Bees Hobsonville (19-21 Sept)*
2. *Hobsonville Point Medical Centre (22 Sept)*
3. *Hobsonville Point Pharmacy (22 Sept)*
4. *North Shore Hospital (night of 22 Sept)*
5. *Shorecare Smales Farm (24 Sept)*
6. *Waitakere Hospital (24-25 Sept)*

The latest media release is available here: [link](#)

**If measles is suspected:**

- Please notify the Medical Officer of Health as soon as you suspect measles – do not wait for a laboratory confirmation.
- Arrange nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal sampling, using viral swab, for measles PCR. Include clinical details and symptom onset. Contact local laboratory if further information on testing is required.
- Isolate patient immediately and maintain IPC measures.
- Check HealthPathways for further up-to-date measles assessment and management information.

**Additional advice:**

- Please encourage primary care staff to check their immune status for measles. If there is measles exposure on-site, immunisation records may be requested.
- As measles is increasing globally, please consider measles in those presenting with symptoms who have recently travelled overseas to countries with active outbreaks.
- Children under one year travelling to countries with active measles outbreaks can be offered MMR vaccine from aged 4 months on prescription. Refer to the immunisations handbook or contact IMAC for further detail.

## Resources:

On the [Te Whatu Ora website](#), you will find:

- A [general information factsheet](#) about measles
- Poster to be put up in public places [asking for people to stay home if they have measles](#)
- Posters for venues [where an exposure event has taken place](#) to sign post potential contacts to further information
- Poster for venues where an exposure event has taken place, to provide [details of when exposure event took place](#) and what potential contacts should do next.

All posters are [available in 18 additional languages](#).

The National Immunisation Programme has a [Dropbox of Resources](#) to help promote MMR vaccination. These are available for free download.

## Public focused FAQs

### ***Where can people get vaccinated?***

You can get your free Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine at your General Practice, hauora Māori or Pacific provider and at many pharmacies.

Some pharmacies are unable to provide vaccinations to people under the age of 3 years, if this is the case in your area you will need to go to your primary care health provider for the free vaccine. Call your local pharmacy to check if they provide MMR vaccines. Or, to find your local pharmacy that provides this service, visit [www.healthpoint.co.nz](http://www.healthpoint.co.nz) and type 'MMR vaccine' into the search box. Many pharmacies will allow walk-ins but it's a good idea to call ahead to check.

You'll need a total of 2 doses to be fully protected and they need to be at least a month apart.

### ***How infectious is measles?***

Measles is a very serious illness that can spread easily amongst those who are not immune. It is much more contagious than COVID-19.

The best protection against measles is to be vaccinated with two doses of the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. It is safe to have an extra MMR vaccination if you can't prove you have had two doses.

The MMR vaccine is free. If you or anyone in your whānau, born on or after 1 January 1969, has not had an MMR vaccine, or aren't sure, ask your General Practice, hauora Māori or Pacific provider, parent or caregiver. If you can't confirm two doses were given, play it safe and get vaccinated. There are no safety concerns with having an extra dose.

### ***What are the symptoms of measles?***

Symptoms can include a fever, cough, runny nose and sore and watery 'pink' eyes. These are followed by a blotchy rash. If you catch measles, you are infectious from four days before and until four days after the rash appears.

***What should people do if they experience symptoms?***

If you have symptoms, you should call your General Practice, hauora Māori or Pacific provider or Healthline on 0800 611 116. If you need to visit your primary care health provider, or an after-hours clinic, phone ahead first to limit the risk of the virus being spread to other people. Because measles is so infectious, it's important that those who have been diagnosed with measles isolate (i.e. staying at home unless seeking healthcare). People who have measles will need to isolate until four days after the rash first appears.

***What does this case mean for New Zealand?***

Public health teams are currently tracing contacts of the most recently identified case to check immunity, manage them appropriately and offer vaccination where appropriate.

We are all aware of how infectious measles is from the last outbreak in Auckland and Northland in 2019. The most important thing that people can do to protect themselves is to ensure they are immunised, along with their tamariki. Vaccination is the best protection against measles.