

# Measles, Mumps & Rubella Vaccine Fact Sheet

The MMR vaccine is one needle that helps to protect against three serious and contagious infections: measles, mumps and rubella, also known as German measles.

## What are measles, mumps and rubella?

- **Measles** is caused by a virus and is the most contagious vaccine preventable disease. It spreads easily through coughing, sneezing and even talking. Symptoms usually start with fever, runny nose, cough and red eyes, followed by a red rash that appears around the face and spreads to the chest, arms and legs. Measles can cause ear infections, pneumonia and swelling of the brain called encephalitis, which can lead to seizures, deafness, mental disabilities and even death.
- **Mumps** is a viral infection of the salivary glands that spreads through coughing, sneezing and close face-to-face contact. It can cause fever, headache and swelling of the salivary glands underneath the jaw bone. Mumps can lead to deafness and meningitis, which is an inflammation of the fluid and lining covering the brain and spinal cord. Mumps can also cause painful, swollen testicles in teenage boys or men and a painful infection of the ovaries in women.
- **Rubella / German measles** is caused by a virus that spreads through coughing, sneezing and close face-to-face contact. It usually starts with a low fever and mild cold symptoms, followed by a rash, and swelling of the glands in the neck. Rubella is usually a mild illness in children but can be more severe in teenagers and adults, who may suffer from aches, pains and swelling in the joints. It can be followed by chronic arthritis and can also cause temporary blood clotting problems and swelling of the brain, called encephalitis. If a woman gets rubella during the first 20 weeks of her pregnancy, her baby may be born with birth defects that can include heart disease, cataracts, deafness and mental disabilities.

## Who should get the publicly funded (free) MMR vaccine?

- Children should receive the first dose of MMR vaccine on or just after their first birthday,
  - The second dose should be given at 4-6 years of age, and it is called the MMRV vaccine since it is combined with varicella, also known as chicken pox.
- Infants 6 to 11 months of age should receive an MMR if travelling to a place where diseases are a concern, but 2 regularly scheduled doses will still be needed after the age of one.
- Anyone born in 1970 and later, who does not know if they have had measles, mumps or rubella, or if they have been immunized for them, can safely get the MMR vaccine.
  - Adults  $\geq$  18 yrs of age who meet certain high risk criteria may receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of MMR.

## What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

- Women of childbearing age, who are not pregnant, should be vaccinated if they do not have a least one documented dose of rubella vaccine or evidence of immunity.
- Pregnant women, who have been told that they are **not** protected against rubella, should receive the MMR vaccine as soon as they are no longer pregnant.
- Pregnancy should be delayed for **at least 4 weeks** following MMR vaccination.
- The MMR vaccine may be given to breastfeeding women if it is clearly needed.

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### Who should **not** get the MMR?

- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past, or to any component of the vaccine:
  - **MMR ® II** - live attenuated measles, mumps and rubella virus, chicken embryo cell culture, sorbitol, sodium phosphate, sucrose, hydrolyzed gelatin, sodium bicarbonate, potassium phosphate, monosodium L-glutamate monohydrate, phenol red, human albumin, fetal bovine serum, neomycin. Does **not** contain latex.
  - **Priorix®** - live attenuated measles, mumps and rubella virus, egg protein, MRC-5 human diploid cells, amino acids, lactose, mannitol, neomycin sulphate and sorbitol.  
**May contain latex.**
- Anyone with
  - blood disorders or cancers affecting the bone marrow, blood or lymph system
  - active untreated tuberculosis
  - an impaired immune response / on medication that lowers the body's ability to fight infections
- Anyone who
  - is pregnant or could be pregnant
  - recently received any blood product
  - received a live vaccine in the last month
- Anyone with a high fever or moderate to severe illness should wait until they feel well.

### What are the common side effects of this vaccine?

- Some people may feel sore and swollen where the needle was given and have general muscle aches, fever, and feel tired for a day or two.
- Some people may have a fever or rash a week or so after immunization, but it is not contagious.
- A few people experience mild joint pain and swelling 1 to 3 weeks afterwards, but it usually only lasts a few days.
- Tylenol® or ibuprofen may be taken afterwards, as directed, to reduce discomfort or fever.
- **Children under 19 years of age must not be given ASA, Aspirin® or salicylates.**

### What else do I need to know?

- No one can catch measles, mumps or rubella from someone who has been recently vaccinated.
- The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, requires all children entering daycare to provide proof of immunization, according to the Publicly Funded Immunization Schedule for Ontario.
- The Immunization of School Pupils Act requires all students between the ages of 4 to 17 to be immunized according to Ontario's Immunization Schedule, unless a valid Statement of Medical Exemption or Conscience or Religious Belief is on file with public health.

### When should I seek medical attention after immunization?

- If you or your child experiences any unusual side effects, seek medical attention and notify us.
- Go to Emergency at a hospital right away or call 911 if you or your child has any of the following after immunization:
  - swelling of the face and neck
  - problems breathing
  - hives and itchy, reddened skin

### Your Record of Protection

After you receive any immunization, make sure your health care provider updates your personal immunization record. Keep it in a safe place. Please inform us of any immunizations not received here.

**Other questions?** Talk to your health care provider or call our Immunization Program at 613-966-5500 Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | [www.hpepublichealth.ca](http://www.hpepublichealth.ca)

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