



# PROTECTION FROM MEASLES, MUMPS and RUBELLA (MMR)

## What is Measles?

Measles is a serious childhood disease. It begins like a common cold with fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes. A red blotchy rash appears 3-7 days later and fades away after 10 days. Measles can cause serious complications such as pneumonia and ear infections, which may result in deafness, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and may cause brain damage. Death from measles occurs once in every 3,000 cases.

## What is Mumps?

Mumps is a common childhood disease causing swelling of the salivary glands and cheeks, making chewing and swallowing difficult. It may also be accompanied by fever, headache, and earache. Mumps is a mild disease but can sometimes cause meningitis encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and deafness. 1 out of 10 females may develop inflammation of the ovaries. These complications can be very painful but usually do not cause sterility.

## What is Rubella (German measles)?

Rubella is a mild disease with slight fever, rash and swelling of the glands in the back of the neck lasting about 3 days. Adult females may have pain and swelling of the joints lasting 1 or 2 weeks. However, if a pregnant woman gets rubella the unborn child can be seriously affected. The child may be born with heart problems, deafness or blindness, if exposed to rubella during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

## Why receive vaccination for Measles, Mumps and Rubella?

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) can be prevented by receiving 2 doses of vaccine at least 1 month apart. The first dose is usually given at 12 months of age as Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine (MMRV). The second dose is also usually given as MMRV at 18 months of age. Currently, MMR may also be given to older children and adults who have not had 2 doses of the vaccine and have not had the disease.

## What are the vaccine's common side effects?

Some people may get a sore arm or fever in the first day or two. 1-3 weeks later other reactions can occur. These reactions are usually very mild and include fever, slight rash and swelling of the glands in the back of the neck, and may last a few days. Pain and swelling of the joints may sometimes occur and continue for 2-3 days. Other more serious side effects are very rare such as swelling of the salivary glands, pain or numbness and tingling in the hands and feet. Some more serious effects such as convulsions and encephalitis are extremely rare. The risk of encephalitis from the measles disease is 1,000 times greater than the risk from the vaccine.

## Is the vaccine safe?

All vaccines recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Provincial Department of Health and Community Services such as this one are safe and effective. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get measles, mumps or rubella.

**For additional information and services contact the Regional Health Authority in your community**



### **Who should NOT get the vaccine?**

Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine or a previous dose of this vaccine should not receive this vaccine. If you/your child has any of the following please consult with your doctor or community/public health before receiving the MMR vaccine:

- Sick with a fever or infection
- Cancer, leukemia or lymphomas
- Receiving treatment with steroids
- Recently received immune globulin (IG) or blood products
- Pregnant or planning to become pregnant. Pregnancy should be avoided for 1 month post immunization

**Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.**

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services contact the Regional Health  
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