

# MEASLES-MUMPS-RUBELLA VACCINE INFORMATION SHEET

## Main points

- The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella.
- Measles is a highly infectious virus spread by respiratory droplets. It causes a fever, cough and rash.
- Mumps is a virus spread by saliva. It causes a swollen neck and salivary glands, and fever.
- Rubella is a virus spread by respiratory droplets; it causes fever, rash and swollen glands as well as severe birth defects in babies of infected pregnant women.
- Many children with measles develop pneumonia and 1 in 1000 develop encephalitis (brain inflammation). For every 10 children who develop measles encephalitis, 1 dies and many have permanent brain damage. About 1 in 100,000 develop SSPE (brain degeneration), which is always fatal.
- One in 5000 children with mumps develop encephalitis (brain inflammation). One in 5 males (adolescent/adult) develop inflammation of the testes. Occasionally, mumps causes infertility or permanent deafness.
- Patients with rubella typically develop a rash, painful swollen glands and painful joints. One in 3000 develops low platelet count (causing bruising or bleeding); 1 in 6000 develops encephalitis (brain inflammation). Up to 9 in 10 babies infected during the first trimester of pregnancy will have major birth defects (including deafness, blindness or heart defects).
- About 1 in 10 people who receive the vaccine has local swelling, redness or pain at the injection site, or fever. About 1 in 20 develops a rash, which is non-infectious.
- About 1 in 100 may develop swelling of the salivary glands.
- Serious reactions to the vaccine, such as a low platelet count (causing bruising or bleeding) are very rare.

## What are measles, mumps and rubella?

Measles, mumps, and rubella are diseases caused by viruses which are easily spread by sneezing and coughing.

Measles causes fever, rash and cold-like symptoms and can lead to ear infection or pneumonia. More serious complications include encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. This can lead to seizures, deafness or permanent brain damage. One person in 3,000 with measles can die from complications.

Mumps causes fever, headaches, and swelling of the salivary glands and cheeks. More serious complications include encephalitis and meningitis. Mumps can also cause temporary deafness. Permanent deafness occurs in less than 1 in 20,000 people with mumps. About 1 in 4 adult men and teenage boys develop painful swelling of the testicles.

Rubella, also known as German measles, can cause serious complications and birth defects in an unborn baby including deafness, eye problems, heart defects, liver damage, and brain damage. Rubella can also cause miscarriage or stillbirth.

## Who should get the MMR vaccine?

All children and adults born during or after 1966 who have not had two documented doses of measles containing vaccine or do not have evidence of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella should get vaccinated.

This is particularly important during outbreaks of measles.

## What are the benefits of getting the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is the best way to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella, which are serious and sometimes fatal diseases.

When you get immunised, you help protect others as well.

## What are possible reactions after the vaccine?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get measles, mumps or rubella.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. A mild fever, a rash that looks like measles and swelling of glands in the cheeks or neck can occur about 7 to 12 days after getting the vaccine. Temporary joint pain may occur in teenage and adult women.

Rarely, more serious reactions can include seizures in children caused by fever, a temporary drop in the blood cells that help prevent bleeding, and encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain (about 1 person in 1 million compared with about 1 in 1,000 from measles).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 000.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to VaxWorks Health on 1300 34 84 22 or to your GP.

## Who should not get the MMR vaccine?

Speak with clinic staff if you are pregnant or if you or your child has had:

- a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of measles, mumps, or rubella vaccine, or any component of the vaccine including gelatine or neomycin, or latex;
- an immune system weakened by disease, a genetic disorder or medical treatment;
- a drop in platelets, the blood cells that help prevent bleeding, after getting a previous dose of MMR vaccine
- a blood transfusion or received other blood products within the past 12 months.

There is no need to delay getting immunised because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns, speak with the clinic staff.