

MEASLES UPDATE

Information for NSW General Practitioners
Please distribute this information to all staff

1. A high risk of measles continues in NSW and our region
2. Infants can now receive MMR from 6 months of age if travelling or exposed to measles
3. Check vaccination history of all patients planning travel and offer FREE measles vaccine if required
4. Isolate suspected cases *immediately* and call the public health unit

Measles in NSW

- Since December 2018, there have been 36 infectious cases of measles in NSW
- Several infectious cases have spent time in busy public places such as hospitals, shopping centres, planes, trains and backpacker hostels
- Infants too young to be routinely vaccinated (<12 months), and those who have not received two doses of measles containing vaccine are at highest risk
- Suspect measles in people with fever and rash **irrespective** of travel history.

Who should be vaccinated?

- Infants should be vaccinated routinely at 12 and 18 months of age
- Any person born during or after 1966 should have two documented doses of measles-containing vaccine – there is no need to perform serology prior to vaccination
- Measles vaccine is safe – if patients are not sure if they've had two prior doses it is recommended to offer one or two doses 4 weeks apart (depending on their history)
- **All** doses of measles vaccine are **FREE** in NSW, including for infants, children and adults up to 53 years of age (irrespective of whether they hold a Medicare card)
- Ensure that you and your staff are also fully vaccinated if born during or after 1966

What about patients planning travel?

- Ask about measles vaccine history for all patients who see you about their travel plans
- Proactively enquire of patients from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) background about their travel plans and offer measles vaccine if they don't have two documented doses

NEW RECOMMENDATION – infants travelling overseas to places where measles is circulating can be vaccinated from 6 months of age. These infants still need two further doses at 12 and 18 months of age, commencing at least 4 weeks after the pre-travel dose*.

Who should not be vaccinated?

Some patients cannot receive the vaccine due to contraindications, and may need immunoglobulin if exposed to an infectious case:

- People with a history of anaphylaxis to MMR vaccine or its components
- Pregnant women
- Infants under 6 months of age
- People with significant immunocompromise

People born prior to 1966 are immune to measles due to childhood infection and do not need serology or vaccination.

Further Information:

- Contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055
- Measles webpage, including recent exposure sites and practice resources: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/default.aspx>
- Australian Immunisation Handbook: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles>

*However MMR vaccine given from 11 months and before 12 months of age counts as the first dose on the Australian Immunisation Register.