

Measles information for schools

15 March, 2019

Schools can be assured there have been no confirmed cases of measles reported in Taranaki as of Friday March 15, 2019.

Measles is a notifiable disease and schools and early childhood centres will be informed if it reaches the region.

With outbreaks of the virus in other parts of New Zealand, teachers and parents do need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of measles.

Measles symptoms include a fever of 38.5C or higher along with a runny nose, cough, sore red eyes, followed by a rash 3-5 days later which usually starts on the head and spreads down the body.

Adults and children who are suspected to have measles or have been in contact with anyone who is a confirmed case should stay away from school, work and public places to help prevent putting others at risk.

The virus is contagious before symptoms appear, and anyone with measles needs to be isolated from the time they become ill until 5 days after the rash has appeared.

You should also ring your doctor or **Healthline on 0800 611116** for more advice if you suspect you or a child has measles.

Now is also the time to consider if you and the children in your care are immune to measles or not.

- Protection against measles is provided by two doses of the MMR vaccine routinely given to children at age 15 months and 4 years
- Children are considered 'fully immunised' against measles when they have two documented MMR vaccinations.
- Similarly, those born in 1969 or later are considered 'fully immunised' against measles when they have two documented MMR vaccinations.
- Those born before 1969 are considered immune.
- Evidence suggests that one dose of measles or MMR vaccine protects 95 per cent of people from developing measles. The other five per cent may need a second vaccination to be covered.

Any child immunised after 2005 will have their immunisations recorded on the National Immunisation Register.

Those who are unsure of their immunity status should get it checked. This can be done through GPs, though some people may also have physical written records at home – like a Plunket or Well Child Tamariki Ora book – which may detail their immunisations. The Taranaki DHB recommends that those who have had no measles immunisation should get vaccinated.

Early childhood centres and schools should also have their own immunisation registers. Now is the time to ensure that schools have these up to date.

Please find attached a fact sheet that can be shared with parents and caregivers.

ENDS

For more information please contact: Cressida Gates, Communications Manager, 027 703 6177.

Measles information for parents

There have so far been no confirmed cases of measles in Taranaki, but parents and caregivers still need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of the illness.

Your child may have measles if they have not been vaccinated and have:

- A fever of 38.5C AND
- A runny nose, sore red eyes or a cough
- A rash 3-5 days later which usually starts on the head and spreads down the body

If you think you or your child might have measles, **you need to keep them home from school** and away from public places and other people. Measles is highly contagious from before symptoms start until 5 days after the rash has appeared.

Please contact your doctor or **Healthline on 0800 611116 for more advice** and let your school or early childhood centre know that your child may have measles.

Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

Children are routinely immunised with the MMR vaccine at age 15 months and 4 years.

Children are considered 'fully immunised' against measles when they have two documented MMR vaccinations.

Please contact your doctor to make sure you and your family are protected.

For more information about measles please visit: <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles>