

## Measles mumps rubella

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious viral diseases. You can catch them if you are exposed to the coughs and sneezes of an infected person. Most people recover fully from measles, mumps and rubella. However, when you do develop complications, they can be very serious. People still die from measles. Vaccination will protect you against all three diseases.

### Facts about measles

- **Common symptoms** – fever, red blotchy rash (begins on the face and then spreads to other parts of the body), runny nose, cough and sore red eyes.
- **Complications** – Pneumonia, encephalitis, otitis media, croup, diarrhoea.

### Facts about mumps

- **Common symptoms** – fever, headache, swelling and tenderness of the salivary glands.
- **Complications** – painful swelling of the testicles that affects about one in five adolescent and adult men. This may (in rare cases) lead to infertility. Mumps infection can cause permanent deafness.

### Facts about rubella

- **Common symptoms** – rash, swollen glands and malaise.
- **Complications** – if you develop rubella while pregnant, your baby could be born with birth abnormalities including deafness, blindness, heart defects and intellectual disabilities.

### One vaccine for all three diseases

In Victoria, the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) is given free-of-charge to:

- Young children – at 12 months of age
- Children – at four years of age
- Women – before becoming pregnant, if blood tests show you are not immune to rubella
- School children - as a 'catch-up' immunisation, if they have not been fully vaccinated.

Adults born during or since 1966 – immunisation is recommended unless you have evidence of having received two doses of MMR. If you have not received the vaccine, speak to your doctor about catch-up doses.

### Pregnancy

You should not be given the vaccine if you are already pregnant and pregnancy should be avoided for 28 days after the vaccination. It is important that women have a rubella blood test before each pregnancy to check that they are protected against the disease.

### Vaccine side effects are less serious than the disease

Possible side effects may occur five to 12 days after immunisation and last two to three days. These may include:

- High fever (over 39°C)
- Faint red rash (not infectious)
- Drowsiness or tiredness
- Head cold and/or runny nose
- Cough and/or puffy eyes
- Swollen salivary glands.

Serious complications, such as inflammation of the brain, are very rare and may affect one in a million people or less.

### **Where to get help**

- Your doctor
- Nurse on Call Tel. 1300 606 024 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Your local council immunisation service
- Immunisation Program, Department of Human Services Victoria Tel. 1300 882 008

### **Things to remember**

- Measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious.
- They can lead to serious complications or death.
- You are more likely to develop serious side effects from the disease than from the vaccine.

### **Want to know more?**

Go to [More information](#) for support groups, related links and references.

### **This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

DHS - Communicable Disease Control

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