Measles
Measles is a very contagious viral illness that causes a skin rash and fever. Serious and sometimes fatal complications include pneumonia and encephalitis (brain inflammation). Measles is also known as rubella, not to be confused with rubella (German measles). Worldwide, measles is the fifth highest cause of illness and death in children. Measles is rare in Australia because of the widespread use of the measles vaccine. It is important to continue immunising children in Australia, because there is a risk that the infection can be brought in by people arriving or returning from overseas.

**Symptoms of measles**

The signs and symptoms of measles may include:

- fever
- general discomfort, illness or lack of wellbeing (malaise)
- runny nose
- dry cough
- sore and red eyes (conjunctivitis)
- red and bluish spots inside the mouth (Koplik’s spots)
- red and blotchy skin rash that appears first on the face and hairline, and then spreads to the body.

**Complications of measles**

Possible complications of measles include:

- otitis media – inflammation of the middle ear
- diarrhoea and vomiting – may cause further complications such as dehydration
- respiratory infections – such as bronchitis, croup or laryngitis
- pneumonia – a type of lung inflammation that causes about 60 per cent of measles deaths
- pregnancy problems – if a pregnant woman contracts measles, she risks miscarriage or premature labour
- encephalitis – or brain inflammation, affects about one person with measles in every 1000. About 10 to 15 per cent of people with encephalitis die and 15 to 40 per cent of survivors have permanent brain damage to varying degrees
- subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE) – occurs in about one in every 100,000 cases of measles. SSPE is an extremely rare progressive inflammation of the brain that causes brain degeneration and is always fatal. SSPE usually begins about seven years after the measles infection.

**Causes of measles**

Measles is most commonly spread when someone swallows or inhales the cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person. The measles virus is carried inside mucus or saliva droplets and remains alive for several hours.

Infection can also occur if someone touches contaminated surfaces or objects and then touches their own mouth or nose or eats before washing their hands. Symptoms usually occur about 10 to 12 days after infection.

Measles is very contagious. Estimates suggest that a person with measles will infect about nine in every 10 people they have contact with who have not been immunised or previously infected with measles.

**High-risk groups**

Measles is rare in Australia because of the immunisation program, but cases still occur. Anyone who hasn’t been immunised, particularly children and healthcare workers, are at high risk of infection.

People who are at increased risk of potentially fatal measles complications include:

- anyone with a chronic illness
- children younger than five years
- adults.

**Diagnosis of measles**
Tests used to diagnose measles may include:
- medical history, including immunisation status and travel history
- physical examination
- blood test.

**Treatment for measles**

A case of measles without complications usually lasts about 14 days and most people make a full recovery. Antibiotics don’t work because the illness is viral. Treatment aims to ease symptoms and reduce the risk of complications. Options may include:
- bed rest
- plenty of fluids
- paracetamol to reduce pain and fever
- isolation to reduce the risk of transmission.

Occasionally, measles develops into a serious disease that requires urgent treatment and can even be life threatening. Sometimes, people can die from complications even if they receive prompt medical attention.

Treatment depends on the complication but may include:
- hospitalisation
- supportive care – for example, to maintain hydration, and to check for fever and infection
- antibiotics – to treat bacterial infection.

**Contact with someone with measles**

If you’ve been in contact with someone with measles and you are not immune to measles (have not been immunised or have not had a measles infection), there are different treatment options. Speak with your doctor about your options.

Depending on your situation, these may include:
- If you were in contact with someone with measles in the last 72 hours – have a measles immunisation immediately.
- If you were in contact with someone with measles in the last three to seven days – immunoglobulin can be given for interim protection. This is known as passive immunisation. Measles vaccination, or active immunisation, should be given later to prevent further risk of infection, but not until five months after you received the immunoglobulin. Normal human immunoglobulin is given as an injection.

**Immunisation against measles**

Immunisation is the best protection against measles. A person who receives the recommended two doses of a measles vaccine has 99 per cent immunity against measles infection. If you have been infected with measles, you will usually have lifelong immunity.

There are two types of measles vaccine. In the first type, the vaccine is a combined measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) vaccine and is commonly known as the MMR vaccine. In the second type (available from July 2013), the vaccine is a combined measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox) vaccine and is commonly known as the MMRV vaccine.

Protection against measles is available under the National Immunisation Program Schedule. In Victoria, immunisation against measles is free of charge for:
- Children at 12 months – the first dose of measles vaccine is given as the MMR combination vaccine.
- Children at 18 months of age – the second dose of measles vaccine is given as the MMRV combination vaccine.
- All children younger than 10 years of age can receive the free National Immunisation Program vaccines.
- Young people under 20 years of age can receive the free National Immunisation Program vaccines.
- Children up to and including nine years – catch-up immunisations are available for children who have not been fully immunised.
- Women planning pregnancy or after the birth of their child – two doses of MMR are available for women who have low immunity or no immunity to rubella.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees and asylum seekers and vulnerable people – catch-up immunisations are available for people who have not been fully vaccinated.
- All people born during or since 1966, without evidence of two documented doses of valid MMR vaccine or without a blood test showing evidence of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella, are eligible for one or two doses of MMR vaccine. (If two MMR doses are required they should be given a minimum of 28 days apart.) If you have not received the vaccine, ask your doctor about catch-up doses.

**Note:** The MMRV vaccine is not recommended for people aged 14 years and over.

**People who should not be immunised against measles**

Not everyone is a suitable candidate for a measles vaccine. A person with an impaired immune system should not be immunised.

Some of the possible causes of impaired immunity include:
- infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or the presence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) from an HIV infection
- taking certain medications, such as high-dose corticosteroids
- receiving immunosuppressive treatment including chemotherapy and radiotherapy
- having some types of cancer, such as Hodgkin’s disease or leukaemia
- having an immune deficiency with extremely low levels of antibodies (hypogammaglobulinaemia, multiple myeloma or chronic lymphoblastic leukaemia).
If you have an impaired immune system, speak with your doctor about what options might be available.

**Pregnancy and MMR immunisation**

You should not be given the MMR vaccine if you are already pregnant. Pregnancy should also be avoided for 28 days after the immunisation. The MMRV vaccine is not recommended for people 14 years and over.

**Where to get help**

- In an emergency, always call triple zero (000)
- Emergency department of your nearest hospital
- Your GP (doctor)
- Local government immunisation service
- Maternal and Child Health Line (24 hours) Tel. 132 229
- NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- Immunisation Program, Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government Tel. 1300 882 008
- National Immunisation Hotline Tel. 1800 671 811
- Pharmacist
- SAEFVIC Tel. 1300 882 924 to report an unexpected or serious reactions to vaccination; the line is attended between 10 am and 3.30 pm and you can leave a message at all other times

**References**


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Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries.

If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
- dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

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More information

Infections

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

• Infection explained
• Preventing infections
• Managing infections
• Childhood infections
• Animal to human infections
• A-Z of infectious disorders

Infection explained

• Antibiotic resistant bacteria
  Careful prescribing of antibiotics will minimise the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria...
• Beat the Bite
  Beat the Bite is a Victorian government health campaign to highlight awareness of the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria. Find resources to be printed and shared along with videos that tell...
• Chest infections
  A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways (bronchitis) or in the smaller air sacs (pneumonia).
• Fever
  A mild fever up to 39°C can actually help the immune system to get rid of an infection.
• Immunisation history statements for children
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.
• Infection risk - cardiac surgery and mycobacteria
  Mycobacterium chimaera is a type of bacterium known as a non-tuberculous mycobacterium (NTM). There is a risk that heater cooler units (HCUs) used in cardiac (heart) surgery may be contaminated with...
• Who provides immunisations in Victoria
  Immunisations in Victoria are provided by local councils, GPs and specially qualified nurses in medical clinics and community health services, some Maternal and
Child Health nurses, travel clinics and...

Preventing infections

- **Antibacterial cleaning products**
  The Western obsession with cleanliness may be partly responsible for the increase in allergic asthma and conditions such as rhinitis.

- **Beat the Bite! Mosquito-borne disease risk and management (video)**
  Dr Finn Romanes, public health doctor at Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services explains the department’s program to monitor and manage the risks associated with Mosquitoes. Learn about the...

- **Food safety while travelling**
  Travelling, eating and drinking go together but unfortunately, traveller's diarrhoea and other food-related illnesses can sometimes come along for the ride.

- **Handwashing - why it's important**
  Washing your hands with soap and warm water can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

- **Home tattooing**
  Home tattooing, or getting tattoos overseas, puts you at risk of serious complications that can be debilitating and life-long.

- **Immunisation history statements for children**
  By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria.

- **Kissing and your health**
  While disease-causing bugs can be transferred during a kiss, most won't cause disease and the risk of serious disease is very small.

- **Personal hygiene**
  Good personal hygiene is one of the most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from illness.

- **Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish**
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the...

- **Piercings**
  If you want to have your body pierced, choose an experienced, registered practitioner to reduce the risks of infection and scarring.

- **Preventing healthcare associated infection (HAI)**
  There are things you can do to reduce the chance of getting an infection while you are in hospital.

- **Quarantine at home - coping tips**
  You may be asked to quarantine yourself at home if you have developed, or been exposed to, an infectious disease.

- **Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men**
  Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

- **Travel health and safety tips (slideshow)**
  We all love travelling to new and exotic places, but unfortunately illnesses and unforeseen events can ruin the trip of a lifetime. With a little effort, take a few of these simple precautions to make...

- **Travel immunisation**
  If you are travelling overseas, check with your doctor well in advance to find out what immunisations you need.

- **Vaccines**
  Vaccines trick the body into building immunity against infectious diseases without causing the actual disease.

- **Who provides immunisations in Victoria**
  Immunisations in Victoria are provided by local councils, GPs and specially qualified nurses in medical clinics and community health services, some Maternal and Child Health nurses, travel clinics and...
Workplace safety - infection control
The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

Managing infections

- Antibiotic resistant bacteria
  Careful prescribing of antibiotics will minimise the emergence of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria.

- Handwashing - why it's important
  Washing your hands with soap and warm water can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

- Medicines and side effects
  Complementary medicines can interact with pharmaceutical medicines.

- Medicines - safety issues
  Make sure your doctor knows about every medicine you take, including vitamins.

- Preventing healthcare associated infection (HAI)
  There are things you can do to reduce the chance of getting an infection while you are in hospital.

- Quarantine at home - coping tips
  You may be asked to quarantine yourself at home if you have developed, or been exposed to, an infectious disease.

- Workplace safety - infection control
  The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

Childhood infections

- Beat the Bite
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- Boils
  Some areas of the body are more susceptible to boils, including the face, throat, armpits, groin and buttocks.

- Chickenpox
  Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment.

- Coughing and wheezing in children
  Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home.

- Croup
  Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough.

- Diphtheria
  Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

- Fever - children
  Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness.

- Fever - febrile convulsions
  A febrile convolution is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever.

- Gastroenteritis in children
  Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea (runny or watery poo) and...

- Hand, foot and mouth disease
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers.

- Impetigo - school sores
  Impetigo, or school sores, is a highly contagious skin infection that commonly affects school-aged children.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Measles

Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) – immunisation

Immunisation is the best protection against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

Melissa's story (video)

Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

Meningitis

Meningitis can cause death and requires urgent medical attention.

Middle ear infections

Middle ear infections often happen during or after a child has a cold.

Mumps

Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever and swollen salivary glands, and a swollen face.

Roseola

Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children.

Rubella

Rubella is a mild illness for most people, but very dangerous for pregnant women and their babies.

Slapped cheek disease

Children with slapped cheek do not need to be kept home from school or day care, as cases are only contagious before the onset of the rash.

Streptococcal infection – group B

Group B streptococcal bacteria can cause a wide range of illnesses in susceptible people including newborns, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes or cancer. Out...

Viral encephalitis

Viral encephalitis is inflammation of the brain caused by a virus and can cause permanent brain damage.

Whooping cough

The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound.

Whooping cough – a family’s experience (video)

A family shares their experience when their baby daughter contracted whooping cough (or pertussis).

Animal to human infections

Anthrax

Anthrax is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial disease that occasionally infects humans.

Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV)

The simplest form of prevention for lyssavirus is to avoid close contact with bats.

Barmah Forest virus disease

Barmah Forest virus (BFV) disease can cause joint inflammation and pain, fatigue and a rash of variable appearance. A full recovery can be expected. Most people recover completely within six months.

Beat the Bite

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Beat the Bite! Mosquito-borne disease risk and management (video)

Dr Finn Romanes, public health doctor at Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services explains the department’s program to monitor and manage the risks associated with Mosquitoes. Learn about the...

Bird flu (avian influenza)

The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza.
- **Dengue virus disease**
  Dengue virus disease (dengue fever, or ‘dengue’) is a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes in many tropical and subtropical parts of the world.

- **Hendra virus**
  The best defence against Hendra virus is to avoid contact with an infected horse.

- **Leptospirosis**
  Leptospirosis is a disease spread from animals to humans, caused by infection with the bacteria Leptospira.

- **Malaria**
  Travellers who visit malarial locations should avoid mosquito bites and take anti-malarial drugs.

- **Mosquitoes can carry diseases**
  You can reduce the risk of mosquito bites if you get rid of potential mosquito breeding sites around your home.

- **Murray Valley encephalitis**
  The only protection from Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) is to avoid mosquito bites.

- **Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish**
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the...

- **Pinworms**
  Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworm infection (worms) is relatively harmless and easily treated.

- **Psittacosis - parrot fever**
  People who have birds as pets, poultry workers and anyone working in aviaries or pet shops, are most at risk of catching psittacosis.

- **Q fever**
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

- **Ross River virus disease**
  Most people recover from Ross River virus disease, although some people have symptoms for a year or more.

- **Tapeworms and hydatid disease**
  It's important for your own health to control tapeworm infection in your dog.

- **Toxoplasmosis**
  Problems only occur if a woman becomes infected with parasites that cause toxoplasmosis for the first time while pregnant.

- **West Nile virus**
  All disease-carrying mosquitoes breed in water or require water to enable eggs to hatch.

- **Zika virus**
  Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus. There is no cure, specific treatment or vaccine for Zika virus.

**A-Z of infectious disorders**

- **Anthrax**
  Anthrax is a rare but potentially fatal bacterial disease that occasionally infects humans.

- **Aspergillus**
  Aspergillus is a fungus that commonly grows on rotting vegetation. It can cause asthma symptoms.

- **Australian bat lyssavirus (ABL V)**
  The simplest form of prevention for lyssavirus is to avoid close contact with bats.

- **Bacterial vaginosis**
  Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance of the bacteria normally present in the vagina.

- **Barmah Forest virus disease**
  Barmah Forest virus (BFV) disease can cause joint inflammation and pain, fatigue and a rash of variable appearance. A full recovery can be expected.
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Beat the Bite mosquitoes - learn how to beat the bite (video)

Hear from Victoria's Chief Health Officer talk about how you can protect yourself from mosquitoes this season...

Bird flu (avian influenza)

The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza...

Bites and stings – first aid

If you are bitten or stung by an insect or animal, apply first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible...

Boils

Some areas of the body are more susceptible to boils, including the face, throat, armpits, groin and buttocks...

Botulism

Botulism is considered a medical emergency. If untreated, it may cause death...

Bubal ulcer

Since the ulcer gets bigger with time, early diagnosis and prompt treatment of Bairnsdale disease can keep skin loss to a minimum...

Candida auris (C. auris)

Candida is a genus of fungi (yeasts) that live on the skin and inside the human body. Candida auris (also called C. auris) is an uncommon fungus that can cause serious infections...

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is a bacterial infection of the skin that occurs most commonly on the lower legs and in areas where the skin is damaged or inflamed...

Chest infections

A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways (bronchitis) or in the smaller air sacs (pneumonia)...

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment...

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is often called the 'silent infection' because most people do not realise they have it...

Colds

Cold viruses are spread by sneezing, coughing and hand contact...

Cold sores

Cold sores are blisters around the mouth and nose, caused by the herpes simplex virus...

Coughing and wheezing in children

Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home...

Croup

Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough...

Cystitis

Cystitis is the most common urinary tract infection in women...

Cyto-megalovirus (CMV)

If an unborn baby gets CMV from their mother, it can cause hearing loss and intellectual disability...

Dengue virus disease
Dengue virus disease (dengue fever, or 'dengue') is a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes in many tropical and subtropical parts of the world.

- Diarrhoea
  Acute diarrhoea in babies and young children can be life threatening.

- Diphtheria
  Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that causes severe inflammation of the nose, throat and windpipe.

- Ebola virus disease (EVD)
  Ebola virus is a rare disease that can cause severe symptoms and can be life-threatening.

- Eyes - trachoma
  A clean face and clean environment are the best protection against trachoma.

- Fatigue fighting tips
  Activity and nutrition help fight fatigue and put more energy into your daily life.

- Fever - children
  Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness.

- Fever - febrile convulsions
  A febrile convolution is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever.

- Flu (influenza)
  Influenza (the flu) is caused by a virus. The flu is more than just a bad cold and can occasionally lead to serious complications, including death. Specific antiviral medication is available. It is...

- Food poisoning - listeria
  Listeria infection is uncommon but very dangerous for the elderly, people whose immune systems are not working properly and pregnant women and their unborn babies.

- Gastroenteritis
  It is important to establish the cause of gastro, as different types of gastroenteritis respond to different treatments.

- Gastroenteritis - amoebiasis
  Amoebiasis can cause diarrhoea among travellers to developing countries.

- Gastroenteritis - campylobacteriosis
  Campylobacteriosis is a type of gastroenteritis and is more common in children under five years of age and young adults.

- Gastroenteritis - cryptosporidiosis
  Outbreaks of cryptosporidiosis have been associated with child care centres, public swimming pools and contaminated water supplies.

- Gastroenteritis - giardiasis
  Most people infected with Giardia parasites do not develop symptoms but can still spread the infection to others.

- Gastroenteritis in children
  Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea (runny or watery poo) and...

- Gastroenteritis - salmonellosis
  You may be more prone to salmonellosis if you are elderly, have another medical condition (such as a weakened immune system) or are malnourished.

- Gastroenteritis - shigellosis
  Outbreaks of shigellosa gastroenteritis can occur in institutional settings, particularly where children are still in nappies or adults are incontinent.

- Genital herpes
  Many people with genital herpes are not aware that they have the infection, because they have no symptoms.

- Genital warts
  Genital warts are one of the most common sexually transmissible infections.

- Glandular fever
Glandular fever is most common among high school and university students, but young children can also become infected by saliva on toys, shared cups, or the hands of carers.

- **Gonorrhoea**
  Gonorrhoea, also spelt gonorrhea, affects both men and women and is transmitted during sex, it may lead to infertility in women if left untreated.

- **Haemolytic uraemic syndrome**
  Haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS) is a rare condition which can lead to chronic kidney damage or death from kidney failure.

- **Hand, foot and mouth disease**
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers.

- **Heart conditions - endocarditis**
  Endocarditis is an infection of the heart valves or the inner lining of the heart.

- **Hendra virus**
  The best defence against Hendra virus is to avoid contact with an infected horse.

- **Hepatitis**
  Hepatitis is an umbrella term for several diseases that affect the liver.

  - **Hepatitis A**
    Immunisation is the best protection against hepatitis A infection and it is recommended for people in high-risk groups.

  - **Hepatitis B**
    Hepatitis B is a viral infection that affects the liver and can lead to serious illness or death.

  - **Hepatitis C**
    In Australia, hepatitis C is most often spread through the sharing of unsterile drug injecting equipment. New all oral combination treatment has greatly improved health outcomes for people with.

  - **Hepatitis C Cure - what it means for Victorians (video)**
  Hepatitis C Cure - what it means for Victorians.

- **HIV**
  In Australia, HIV is most commonly spread when having sex without a condom and when sharing needles and other injecting equipment.

- **Impetigo - school sores**
  Impetigo, or school sores, is a highly contagious skin infection that commonly affects school-aged children.

- **Labyrinthitis and vestibular neuritis**
  Labyrinthitis and vestibular neuritis are disorders that result in inflammation of the inner ear and the nerve connecting the inner ear to the brain.

- **Legionnaires' disease**
  Legionnaires' disease is a rare form of pneumonia.

- **Leprosy (Hansen’s disease)**
  Once a person with leprosy begins treatment they quickly become non-infectious.

- **Leptospirosis**
  Leptospirosis is a disease spread from animals to humans, caused by infection with the bacteria Leptospira.

- **Malaria**
  Travellers who visit malarial locations should avoid mosquito bites and take anti-malarial drugs.

- **Measles**
  Measles can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation.

  - **Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) - immunisation**
    Immunisation is the best protection against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox).

- **Meningitis**
  Meningitis can cause death and requires urgent medical attention.
- **Meningococcal disease**
  Do not leave young adults alone if they suddenly develop a fever because they may become seriously ill very quickly.

- **Molluscum contagiosum**
  Molluscum contagiosum can be mistaken for genital warts or pimples, check with your doctor for an accurate diagnosis.

- **Mosquitoes can carry diseases**
  You can reduce the risk of mosquito bites if you get rid of potential mosquito breeding sites around your home.

- **Mumps**
  Mumps is a viral illness that causes fever and swollen salivary glands, and a swollen face.

- **Murray Valley encephalitis**
  The only protection from Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) is to avoid mosquito bites.

- **New drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C – Frequently Asked Questions for patients**
  In Australia, hepatitis C is most often spread through the sharing of unsterile drug injecting equipment. New all oral combination treatment has greatly improved health outcomes for people with.

- **Osteomyelitis**
  Osteomyelitis means an infection of bone which can either be recent or longstanding.

- **Parechovirus**
  Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of parechovirus to others, both for those infected and their carers.

- **Pericarditis**
  Pericarditis symptoms may be similar to those of heart attack and include chest pain and abnormal heart rhythms.

- **Pets – safe handling of reptiles and tropical fish**
  People in contact with tropical fish and reptiles such as turtles, lizards and snakes may be at risk of infections and illness due to germs (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) carried on the.

- **Pinworms**
  Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworm infection (worms) is relatively harmless and easily treated.

- **Pleurisy**
  Treating any infection of the upper respiratory tract quickly will reduce the risk of developing pleurisy.

- **Pneumococcal disease**
  Pneumococcal disease is a leading cause of serious illness and death in young children.

- **Pneumonia**
  Anyone can get pneumonia, but young children and the elderly are most susceptible.

- **Polio and post-polio syndrome**
  Polio is a serious disease that can cause life-threatening paralysis and possibly death.

- **Psittacosis - parrot fever**
  People who have birds as pets, poultry workers and anyone working in aviaries or pet shops, are most at risk of catching psittacosis.

- **Q fever**
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

- **Reactive arthritis**
  Reactive arthritis is a form of arthritis that occurs as a result of some bacterial infections.

- **Rheumatic fever**
  Untreated rheumatic fever can lead to serious complications such as rheumatic heart disease.

- **Roseola infantum**
  Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children.
- **Ross River virus disease**
  Most people recover from Ross River virus disease, although some people have symptoms for a year or more.

- **Rotavirus**
  Rotavirus is a common cause of viral gastroenteritis for Australian babies and preschool children.

- **Rubella**
  Rubella is a mild illness for most people, but very dangerous for pregnant women and their babies.

- **Salpingitis**
  Salpingitis is one of the most common causes of female infertility and may permanently damage the fallopian tubes.

- **Septicemia**
  Bacteria in the bowels, urinary tract, mouth and skin can cause disease if they get into the bloodstream.

- **Shiga toxin-producing E.coli**
  There are many types of E.coli bacteria, most of which are harmless. However, some types of E.coli produce toxins (poisons) that can cause gastroenteritis (gastro). One of these types of E.coli is...

- **Shingles**
  Shingles is caused by the same virus responsible for chickenpox.

- **Strep throat**
  Children with strep throat do not need to be kept home from school or daycare, as cases are only contagious before the onset of the rash.

- **Staphylococcus aureus - golden staph**
  Hospital patients are more likely to be infected by golden staph because of surgical or other wounds.

- **Streptococcal infection - group A**
  *Streptococcal infection - group A* can cause sore throats (pharyngitis), scarlet fever or impetigo (school sores).

- **Streptococcal infection – group B**
  Group B streptococcal bacteria can cause a wide range of illnesses in susceptible people including newborns, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes or cancer. Out...

- **Styes**
  Styes may be red and sore, but they generally do not cause any damage to the eye or eyelids.

- **Swimmer's ear**
  Swimmer's ear can be triggered by exposure to water or mechanical damage due to overzealous cleaning.

- **Tapeworms and hydatid disease**
  It's important for your own health to control tapeworm infection in your dog.

- **Tetanus**
  Tetanus is a life-threatening disease and immunisation is the best way to reduce your risk.

- **Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men**
  Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), the...

- **Tinea**
  Tinea is contagious and can be spread by skin-to-skin contact or indirectly through towels, clothes or floors.

- **Toxic shock syndrome (TSS)**
  If you think you could have toxic shock syndrome, stop using tampons immediately and go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital.

- **Toxoplasmosis**
  Problems only occur if a woman becomes infected with parasites that cause toxoplasmosis for the first time while pregnant.
• **Travel health - yellow fever immunisation**
  
  If you are travelling or passing through areas infected with yellow fever, some countries require you to be vaccinated.

• **Tuberculosis (TB)**
  
  Tuberculosis is spread when a person with an active infection coughs, laughs, sings or sneezes.

• **Urinary tract infections (UTI)**
  
  Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can target the urethra, bladder or kidneys.

• **Vaginal thrush**
  
  Vaginal thrush is a common infection caused by an overgrowth of yeasts in the vagina.

• **Viral encephalitis**
  
  Viral encephalitis is inflammation of the brain caused by a virus and can cause permanent brain damage.

• **Viral haemorrhagic fever**
  
  Viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) is an extremely infectious and life threatening disease caused by a group of viruses, including the Ebola virus.

• **Warts**
  
  Warts can be stubborn, so you may need to use more than one type of treatment.

• **West Nile virus**
  
  All disease-carrying mosquitoes breed in water or require water to enable eggs to hatch.

• **Whooping cough**
  
  The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound.

• **Whooping cough – a family’s experience (video)**
  
  A family shares their experience when their baby daughter contracted whooping cough (or pertussis).

• **Williams syndrome**
  
  Williams syndrome often goes undiagnosed, which means that some people with the disorder fail to get the support and treatment they need until later in life.

• **Zika virus**
  
  Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus. There is no cure, specific treatment or vaccine for Zika virus.

**Related Information**

• **Flu (influenza) – immunisation**
  
  Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups.

• **Bird flu (avian influenza)**
  
  The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza.

• **Flu (influenza)**
  
  Influenza (the flu) is caused by a virus. The flu is more than just a bad cold and can occasionally lead to serious complications, including death. Specific antiviral medication is available. It is...

• **Yellow fever immunisation**
  
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  Tuberculosis is spread when a person with an active infection coughs, laughs, sings or sneezes.

**Home**

**Related information on other websites**

• [Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government – Immunise Australia Program](#)
• [Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government – Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (MMRV)](#)
• [Department of Health, Victorian Government – Check your immunisation HALO](#)
• [Department of Health, Victorian Government – Free vaccine Victoria: criteria for eligibility](#)
• [Department of Health, Victorian Government – Immunisation](#)
• [Department of Health, Victorian Government – Infectious Diseases. In your language](#)

Travel immunisation

Some illnesses you can catch overseas can be prevented with immunisation. Anyone travelling overseas should visit their doctor or travel health clinic to find out what vaccinations they need.
My Health Life helps you manage your health

With tools, information and recommendations tailored to you, it’s your personal and secure health dashboard.

Learn more

Multilingual resources on measles

- Measles - community fact sheet
- Measles is about
- Measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox immunisation information
- Measles, mumps and rubella immunisation information
- Vaccine side effects

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