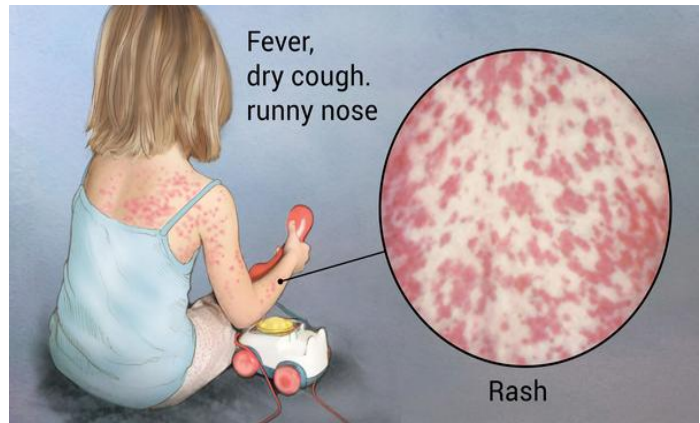


Measles is circulating

Measles is a highly infectious disease that affects both adults and children. Measles is more serious than many people realise, of the recent cases in New Zealand eight have required hospital treatment. Measles starts with a fever, cough, runny nose and/or sore eyes followed a few days later by a rash. People are infectious from 5 days before to 5 days after the rash appears.



Most of the recent cases have occurred in unimmunised people. Immunisation, with two doses of the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, remains the best way to prevent infection and spread of measles within the community. Immunisation is free for anyone born from 1 January 1969 who have not previously received two doses of a measles containing vaccine. Unimmunised people exposed to measles will need to stay away from school for at least 14 days. So please encourage students, parents and staff to get immunised as soon as possible, it's free.

What schools can do to be prepared:

- 1) Inform staff, students, parents and caregivers about the current measles cases in your area.
- 2) Ask staff, students, parents and caregivers to make sure that their immunisations and their children's immunisations are up to date. If they are unsure, encourage them to check with their family doctor.
- 3) If someone develops symptoms of measles, separate them from others while they are waiting to be taken home and call Healthline on **0800 611 116** for advice as soon as possible.
- 4) Record the names of students who are not immunised. This will enable public health officials to quickly identify those at risk should the need arise.
- 5) Ensure that people with measles, and unimmunised people who have been exposed to measles, do not attend school while they are infectious.

For further information on measles and measles immunisation please visit the Ministry of Health website <http://www.health.govt.nz/measles> or the Immunisation Advisory Centre website <http://www.immune.org.nz>. You can also call the Immunisation Advisory Centre toll-free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) for advice.