

5th March 2019

To all Primary School Principals

Information regarding Measles Outbreak March 2019

There is currently a measles outbreak in Christchurch affecting unimmunised or partially immunised infants, children and adults.

Measles is a highly infectious disease and is more serious than many people realise. Symptoms include fever, cough, red eyes and a runny nose, and then a rash which develops after about 3 days. About one in ten people with measles need to be hospitalised and 30% will develop complications.

The best measles prevention is two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine which is free for all New Zealand children.

Prevent measles at your school

1. Inform staff, parents and caregivers that there is measles in the community.
2. Check and update your Immunisation Register. Registers allow unimmunised children who have been in contact with someone with measles to be quickly identified to help reduce the risk of further spread.
3. Ask parents and caregivers to make sure that their children's immunisations are up-to-date. Staff born during or after 1969 should also make sure that they are fully vaccinated for measles.

Measles at your school

1. If a child becomes unwell with possible measles while at your service, keep them separate from other children while waiting for them to be taken home. This helps reduce the risk of measles spreading. ***Please ask parents to phone their GP's for advice and information before going to the surgery.***
2. GPs and health professionals are required to notify the local Medical Officer of Health of any suspected cases of measles. Once a notification is confirmed, your service will be contacted by public health staff who will provide information and advice.
3. A child or teacher with measles should stay away from Primary School services for five days from the appearance of their rash or until recovered, depending on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health. Unimmunised children who have been in contact with a measles case during the infectious stages should be excluded from the Primary School. Time of isolations starts 7 days after your first contact with measles, isolation finishes 14 days after your last contact.

If you have questions about the Ministry of Education requirements please contact your local Ministry of Education office. You can find contact details at <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/AboutThisSite/ContactUs.aspx>

More Information

For further health information on measles please go to the Ministry of Health website <http://www.moh.govt.nz> or the Immunisation Advisory Centre website <http://www.immune.org.nz>

You can also call the Immunisation Advisory Centre toll-free line 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) for advice.

Please find attached information for parents/caregivers for your use as required.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Ramon Pink
Medical Officer of Health
Community and Public Health
A Division of the Canterbury District Health Board