

Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service
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19 May 2016

Dear Principal

Measles update and information for schools

I would be most grateful if you could share with your school community this information and advice about preventing measles.

There is currently an outbreak of measles affecting three Waikato schools. As of 18 May 2016 there have been 22 confirmed cases with a further 9 under investigation.

To date, there are no confirmed cases in the Bay of Plenty or Lakes districts. However, this is an important reminder for parents to ensure their children are up to date with their immunisations.

Measles immunisation is free and is the best way to prevent measles. Two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is 99% effective in preventing measles. The MMR vaccine is given as part of the usual childhood immunisations at 15 months of age and at 4 years of age. If any, or both, of these immunisations have been missed, it is not too late to catch up. If there is an outbreak of measles at a school, students who have not had their immunisations may be required to stay at home for two weeks (or longer) to ensure they don't pass measles on to others.

For more information please see the attached information sheet or go to: www.ttophs.govt.nz/measles

Measles can be serious but fortunately it is easily preventable through immunisation. Thank you for your assistance with helping to prevent the spread of measles to our communities.

Yours sincerely

Dr Neil de Wet

Medical Officer of Health



Measles Information Sheet for School Staff, Parents and Caregivers – 19 May 2016

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What is measles?

- Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that is spread from person to person through the air by breathing, sneezing or coughing.
- Early symptoms of measles are fever, runny nose, sore red eyes and cough; after 3-5 days a red, blotchy rash appears on the face and head and then spreads down the body.
- Measles can be a very serious illness, with one in three sufferers experiencing complications such as ear infections, pneumonia, bronchitis or diarrhoea.
- On average, 1 in 10 people with measles requires hospitalisation.

Who is at risk of measles infection?

- People younger than 47 years of age who have not had two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine;
- Infants under the age of 15 months who have not received their first routine dose of MMR vaccine;
- Children over 4 years old who have not received their second dose of MMR.
- People born before 1 January 1969 (47 years and older) are considered to be immune as measles was very common before this date.

If you develop symptoms of measles:

- Stay at home and away from public places;
- See your doctor as soon as possible so a diagnosis can be confirmed, however, phone the medical centre ahead to alert them of your symptoms and to allow them to make arrangements to assess you safely and without infecting other people;
- If you are unable to visit your local medical centre, phone Healthline on 0800 611 116.

For more information:

- Visit the Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service website - www.ttophs.govt.nz/measles