

# Measles: information for contacts

Issued: 24 October 2008

**Contacts are people who shared the same air as someone who was infectious with measles. Some contacts who are not immune may go on to develop the infection unless they get preventive treatment**

## Note to health care professionals:

- Information on this factsheet should be completed by a health care professional for each patient (exposure date, indicate if given MMR or NHIG, and practice stamp).
- A NSW Health measles factsheet should also be given to the contact:  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/measles.html>

1. Date of contact with the infectious person: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Watch out for symptoms of measles until (last contact date + 18 days): \_\_\_\_\_

3. You have been given the following treatment to prevent measles:

**Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine after measles exposure**

MMR vaccine can make the body produce antibodies against measles and will protect against the disease developing if it is given within 72 hours after exposure to the virus. As a precaution, you should not have contact with anyone who may be at risk of measles until 18 days after your exposure - provided you remain well. MMR vaccine is not suitable for everyone. Pregnant women and immunosuppressed people should not get MMR. Please see the footnote<sup>1</sup> regarding infants and young children.

**Normal Human Immunoglobulin (NHIG) injection after measles exposure**

Normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG) is antibodies purified from blood donors. NHIG can provide short-term protection against infection if given within 144 hours of exposure. As a precaution, you should not have contact with anyone who may be at risk of measles until (date in 2. above): \_\_\_\_\_ - provided you remain well. NHIG does not provide long-term protection and MMR vaccination might be useful to protect from measles infection in future. MMR should be delayed for 5 months after receiving NHIG.

**No treatment after measles exposure**

If exposure to measles occurred more than 7 days ago, the above treatments are not effective. You should be on the lookout for symptoms. As a precaution, you should not have contact with anyone who may be at risk of measles until (date in 2. above): \_\_\_\_\_ - provided you remain well.

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CONTACTS

### What is a measles contact?

"Contacts" are people who shared the same air as someone while they were infectious with measles (for example, being in the same room as someone with measles). If the infection is transferred and takes hold in contacts, these people go on to develop measles symptoms in 7 to 18 days after sharing the same air.

<sup>1</sup> **For infants aged 9 or 10 months who have been given MMR for the first time after exposure to measles:** This does not replace normal immunisation with MMR. Your baby should receive the usual first MMR dose when he or she reaches 12 months. A second dose should be given at 4 years.

**For infants aged 11 or 12 months who have been given MMR for the first time after exposure to measles:** This does not replace normal immunisation with MMR. Your baby should receive the usual first MMR immunisation dose after 4 weeks. A second dose should be given at 4 years.

**For infants aged 12 months:** this replaces the normal first dose MMR immunisation. A second dose should be given at 4 years.

**For children aged 1 to 4 years who have been given MMR for the second time after exposure to measles:** This replaces the normal second dose provided there has been a gap of at least 4 weeks between doses.

Many contacts will be immune to measles because of past measles infection or immunisation and will not get the disease. Other contacts who are not immune may catch the virus and may then go on to spread the virus to others. It is sometimes possible to stop the infection in non-immune people – either by giving Measles, Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine or by giving an injection of normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG).

### Who is at risk of measles infection?

People are at risk of measles if they have been a contact of someone with measles and if they are not immune to measles. People who are regarded as not immune to measles include:

- People born since 1965 who have not had two doses of MMR vaccine<sup>2</sup>
- Babies under the age of 12 months who have not received their first dose of MMR vaccine
- Children over four years who have not received their second dose of MMR vaccine
- Any people who have a weakened immune system (for example, people who are receiving chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancer or people who take high-dose steroid medications) even if they have been fully immunised or have had past measles infection.

### What should contacts do?

- Read the NSW Health measles factsheet and look out for the symptoms of measles until the date on the front of this sheet (calculated as date of contact plus 18 days). The first symptoms of measles are **fever, runny nose, sore runny eyes** and **cough**. The **rash** starts later.
- As a precaution, it is a good idea not to have contact with anyone who may be at risk until 18 days after your exposure - providing you remain well.

### If you (or your child) develops symptoms of measles

- Do not attend public places (such as work, school, child care or shopping centres) or use public transport.
- See a doctor, preferably your general practitioner, as soon as possible so a diagnosis can be confirmed. Take this fact sheet along.
- Call the surgery ahead to alert them of your symptoms and to allow them to make arrangements to assess you safely and without infecting other people.
- Call the public health unit on the number below.

### Further information – Public Health Units in NSW

For more information please contact your doctor, local public health unit or community health centre – look under *NSW Government* at the front of the White Pages.

Metropolitan Areas			Rural Areas		
Northern Sydney / Central Coast	Hornsby	02 9477 9400	Greater Southern	Goulburn	02 4824 1837
	Gosford	02 4349 4845		Albury	02 6021 4799
South Eastern Sydney / Illawarra	Randwick	02 9382 8333	Greater Western	Broken Hill	08 8080 1499
	Wollongong	02 4221 6700		Dubbo	02 6841 5569
Sydney South West	Camperdown	02 9515 9420	Hunter / New England	Bathurst	02 6339 5601
Sydney West	Penrith	02 4734 2022		Newcastle	02 4924 6477
	Justice Health Service	Parramatta	02 9840 3603	North Coast	Tamworth
Matraville		02 9311 2707	Port Macquarie		02 6588 2750
NSW Department of Health	Nth Sydney	02 9391 9000	Lismore	02 6620 7500	
NSW Health website	www.health.nsw.gov.au				

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### Medical practice or Health Service contact details

<sup>2</sup> People born in or before 1965 are likely to have had measles infection and are usually immune.