

# MMR

## Important information about this vaccine

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Immunization Information



### More serious problems:

- One to three weeks after being vaccinated, one in four women and one out of 100 children find their joints ache or are swollen for a few days.
- There may be swelling of the glands in the jaw or neck.
- Very rarely, a few children have a condition called thrombocytopenia (low platelet count in the blood) that can cause a bleeding disorder.
- High fever can cause seizures.
- In very rare cases, a child may have inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or deafness. This occurs in approximately one case per million doses of vaccine distributed. The risk of getting encephalitis from the measles disease is about one case in 1,000.
- Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are very rare, occurring at a rate of approximately one to three reports per 1,000,000 doses of vaccine distributed.

Receiving a vaccine does present risks for some people who may have allergic or other reactions. But these risks are very small compared to what happens if you or your child gets any of these diseases.

### What to do if there is a reaction to MMR vaccine?

- For pain or swelling where the needle was given, place a cool damp towel on the area.
- For pain or fever, give acetaminophen (also called Tylenol® or Tempra®) as directed on the bottle.

**NOTE: Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) is not recommended for persons less than 18 years of age because of the increased risk of Reye's syndrome.**

Call your local public health nurse if you have questions or if there is an unusual reaction to the vaccine.

**Talk to a public health nurse or doctor before getting this vaccine, if the person who is to get the vaccine:**

- is severely allergic to gelatin or neomycin or any part of the vaccine.
- has a lowered ability to fight infections due to cancer, other serious disease, or treatment (such as medications to fight cancer, radiation therapy or other drugs such as cortisone).
- is sick now with something more serious than a cold.

- has received immune globulin or other blood products within the past 12 months. Depending upon the dose and product received, it may be necessary to delay immunization with MMR vaccine.
- has a severe allergy to something.
- is pregnant.
- has been given a live vaccine, such as chickenpox vaccine, in the previous four weeks.

**NOTE: Live vaccines can be given at the same time. However, if given on separate days, they must be given at least four weeks apart.**

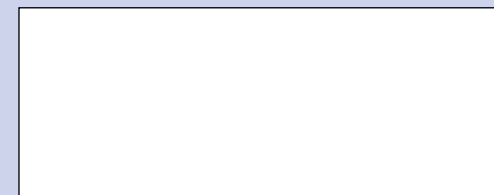
### The MMR vaccine should not be given if:

- the person has had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of this vaccine.

### For more information:

Call your local public health office.

[www.health.gov.ab.ca](http://www.health.gov.ab.ca)



## What are measles, mumps and rubella?

Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) were once very common diseases in Canada. Nearly all children had measles by the time they turned 15 years old. There were thousands of cases of mumps in children. During the last rubella epidemic in North America about 30,000 babies were infected with rubella before birth. More than 8,000 of these babies died and about 20,000 were born with vision or hearing loss, mental disabilities, or heart defects. Until vaccines were developed, there was little you could do to prevent getting these diseases.

**Measles** is one of the most serious diseases of childhood. Measles causes a rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes. One out of every 10 children gets an ear infection or pneumonia. In one out of every 1,000 cases of measles there may be inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) that can lead to convulsions, deafness or mental disability. Death occurs in about one out of every 3,000 cases of measles.

Measles also causes serious illness in adults and increases the risk of miscarriage and premature delivery in pregnant women.

**Mumps** is a disease that causes fever, headache and swollen glands around the jaw. Sometimes mumps causes inflammation of the spinal cord and covering of the brain (meningitis) but usually this does not cause permanent damage. In rare cases a child's brain becomes severely inflamed (encephalitis). Mumps can also cause deafness. About one out of four men who get mumps have painfully swollen testicles that may lead to sterility in rare cases. For one out of 10 women who get mumps, the ovaries will be infected and painful.

**Rubella** is also called German measles. It causes a slight fever, sore throat, rash and swelling of the neck glands that lasts about three days. Painful and swollen joints may occur in some people. In very rare cases rubella may cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) and a bleeding disorder.

When a woman gets rubella in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, there is a greater than 80 per cent chance she may have a miscarriage or the baby will be born with a serious disability.

## Who should receive MMR vaccine?

All children should receive the MMR vaccine. Two doses are needed for lifelong protection. The first dose is given at one year of age and the second dose at preschool age. If all children were given this vaccine, these diseases could be eliminated.

If you are a woman of childbearing age and you are not immune to rubella, you should get the MMR vaccine as soon as possible. There is no evidence the vaccine will harm unborn children, but you should not have it while pregnant. You should wait at least one month after getting the vaccine before becoming pregnant.

Young children given the MMR vaccine are no risk to pregnant women as the virus in the vaccine does not spread from person to person.

## Is MMR vaccine safe?

Yes, MMR vaccine is safe. This vaccine contains a tiny amount of germs that cause the diseases. These germs have been weakened so they cannot give you the diseases. In Canada, vaccines must undergo laboratory and field-testing, and pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal government before they are introduced. Once a vaccine has been approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, side effects are continuously monitored.

## What if the person to receive the vaccine is allergic to latex or thimerosal?

Because latex and thimerosal are not in the MMR vaccine or its packaging, a person with these allergies may still receive this vaccine.

## What are possible side effects and risks of the MMR vaccine?

### Less serious problems:

- One or two weeks after getting the needle, about one in every 10 people will have a fever, and/or a mild red rash lasting 24 to 48 hours.
- There may be redness, swelling, and tenderness in the area where the needle was given.

If a more severe reaction is experienced or any of the following problems occur, please call your local public health office and speak with a nurse.

