

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) Vaccine

**Keep your child safe.
Get all shots on time.**

By getting all shots on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

The MMR vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your public health nurse or doctor to make an appointment.

Who should get the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is given to children as a series of two doses or shots. The first dose is given at 12 months of age, and the second at 18 months. The vaccine is given at the same time as other childhood immunizations.

MMR Vaccine	Child's Age at Vaccination
1 st dose	12 months
2 nd dose	18 months

The vaccine is also provided free to the following persons:

- Women of child-bearing age who are not immune to rubella (German measles)
- Older children and adults born after 1956 who have not been immunized.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

Benefits of MMR Vaccine

The MMR vaccine is the best way to protect your child against measles, mumps, and rubella, which are serious and sometimes fatal diseases.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well.

Possible Reactions after the Vaccine

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get measles, mumps or rubella disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the shot was given. A mild fever, a rash (that looks like measles) and swelling of glands in the cheeks or neck can occur about 7 to 12 days after getting the vaccine. Temporary joint pain may occur in teenage and adult women.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

More serious reactions can include seizures caused by fever (about 1 person out of 3,000), a temporary drop in the blood cells that help prevent bleeding (about 1 person out of 30,000), and, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis – about 1 person in one million). The possibility of getting encephalitis from measles is about 1 in 1,000, which is much higher than from the vaccine.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis.

This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine.

Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.

Who should not get the MMR vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if you or your child have had:

- a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of measles, mumps, or rubella vaccine, or any component of the vaccine including gelatin or neomycin, or to latex
- an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
- a drop in the blood cells (platelets) that help prevent bleeding after getting a previous dose of MMR vaccine
- a blood transfusion or received other blood products within the past 12 months
- or if you are pregnant.

What are Measles, Mumps, and Rubella?

Measles, mumps, and rubella are diseases caused by viruses. The viruses are easily spread through the air by sneezing and coughing.

Measles (red measles) causes fever, rash and cold-like symptoms and can lead to ear infection or pneumonia. More serious complications, occurring in 1 child in 1,000, include inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). This can lead to convulsions, deafness or permanent brain damage. One person in 3,000 with measles can die from complications.

Mumps causes fever, headaches, and swelling of the salivary glands and cheeks. More serious complications include encephalitis, which can lead to permanent brain damage. About 1 in 20 people with mumps get mumps meningitis. Mumps can also cause temporary deafness. Permanent deafness occurs in less than 5 of 100,000 people with mumps. About 1 in 4 adult

men and post-pubertal boys develop painful swelling of the testicles.

Rubella (German measles) can cause serious complications and birth defects in an unborn baby including deafness, eye problems, heart defects, liver damage, and brain damage. This is called Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS), and occurs in 1 in 4 babies born to women who become infected with the virus in the first three months of their pregnancy. Rubella can also cause miscarriage or stillbirth.

These diseases are now rare in BC because of routine childhood vaccination programs.

Mature Minor Consent

Every effort is made to seek parental or guardian informed consent prior to immunization. Children under the age of 19 who are able to understand the risks and benefits may consent to or refuse immunizations, regardless of the parent's or guardian's wishes. It is recommended that parents/guardians and their minor children discuss immunizations beforehand, and ask the nurse or doctor any questions.

For more BC HealthFile topics visit www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm, or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at www.bchealthguide.org