

Public Health South

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Fact Sheet

PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK IN A MEASLES OUTBREAK

During a measles outbreak some people are at higher risk of becoming very sick or having a major complication from the measles infection. These include non-immune pregnant women, people with a weak immune system (from illness or medicine) and infants <12 months old.

If you have not been exposed to measles, and do not know if you are immune, please see your family doctor for advice about how to protect yourself or your child.

If you think you or your child may be at high risk, and have been in contact with someone with measles, please call your GP/family doctor/maternity carer/specialist as soon as possible for advice.

Pregnant Women

- Non-immune women who became ill with measles while pregnant are at risk of miscarriage, premature labour and having a low-birth-weight baby.
- Pregnant women should not receive the MMR vaccine. Women of child bearing age should avoid pregnancy for one month after having a dose of the MMR vaccine.
- If you are **pregnant and have not had a measles vaccine** in the past you **should not receive MMR** while pregnant. See your doctor if you are unsure about your measles immunity, this can be checked by a blood test. If you are not immune, the people who you are in close contact with can help protect you and your unborn baby by being immunised against measles.
- If you are **pregnant and have had a measles vaccine in the past** you are almost certainly protected. See your doctor if you are unsure so that your measles immunity can be checked.
- Pregnant women who think they have measles, or have come in contact with someone with measles, must call their GP or lead maternity carer as soon as possible.

People with a weak immune system

- Some people are born with a weak immune system and can't be vaccinated with the MMR vaccine.
- Some illnesses (e.g. leukaemia, HIV, transplant patients) and medications (high dose steroids, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and other immune suppressing medicines) can weaken the immune systems and make people susceptible to measles even if they have received a measles vaccination in the past.
- People with a severely weakened immune system should not receive a MMR vaccine.

- If you think you might have a weakened immune system and think you have measles, or have come in contact with someone with measles, you must call your GP or specialist as soon as possible.
- The people who you are in close contact with can help protect you by being immunised against measles.

Children <12 Months Old

- Children younger than 12 months old are very susceptible to measles because the first MMR vaccine is not given until children reach at least 12 months old so they have no measles immunity.
- If you think your child has measles, or has come in contact with someone with measles, and has not had a MMR vaccine, please call your family doctor as soon as possible.
- The people who are in close contact with your child can help protect them by being immunised against measles.

If you are high risk it is important that all your close contacts are immunised.

If you are not sure if you are immunised call your GP.

Pregnant women and people with severely weakened immune system should not receive the MMR vaccine.