

Measles Vaccination Update

Thank you for continuing to deliver MMR vaccinations to your practice populations, and for your vigilance regarding suspect measles cases and prompt notification to public health. Your work has made a significant difference in containing the spread of measles within this region.

Current national priorities for MMR vaccination

These are:

- Ensuring all children receive their vaccinations on time at 15 months (12 months in Auckland) and four years to maintain the national Childhood Immunisation Schedule
- In accordance with the National Immunisation Schedule, all children under five who have not received either dose of MMR should be actively recalled. We consider active recall of this group to be in line with the priority groups.
- Vaccinating children and adolescents aged 15 and under who have not had a single dose of MMR
- Vaccinating susceptible close contacts within 72 hours of first exposure to measles when advised by local public health unit
- Vaccinating babies aged six months to 11 months who live in Auckland or who are travelling to Auckland or overseas to a country that has an active outbreak of measles (Please remember that any child vaccinated before 12 months of age will still need two further doses of MMR).

New additional priority group for MMR vaccination

Given the current outbreaks of measles in Samoa, Tonga, Philippines and Fiji, the Ministry of Health is asking primary care providers to ensure vaccinations are up-to-date for any individual (aged 50 and under) who provide evidence that they will be travelling to one of these areas, or any country that has an active outbreak of measles. Outbreak regions can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/measles-global>.

This means that people under the age of 50 travelling from New Zealand to Samoa, Tonga, the Philippines and Fiji are now included in the national priority groups for MMR vaccination. These people need to be vaccinated at least two weeks before travel.

The Ministry of Health will issue a public travel advisory encouraging vaccination for people travelling to outbreak areas.

Please do not actively recall people outside of the above priority groups at this time.

Addressing immunisation gap in 15-29 year olds

The Ministry of Health is aware that New Zealand has a known immunisation gap for measles in the 15 to 29 age group. Planning is underway address this immunisation gap and the Ministry will advise when a vaccination plan and vaccine to carry it out are available.

Dr Ramon Pink

Medical Officer of Health