

28 February 2019

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National Health Advisory

Measles outbreaks overseas (Ministry of Health)

ADVISORY SUMMARY:

There are currently significant measles outbreaks overseas, including in the Philippines and some European countries. For countries that are affected, please check the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, USA) website for travel updates - <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/travelers.html>.

The Ministry of Health is advising practices to be alert to the possibility of measles among patients who have recently travelled through its regular information to practices about immunisation issues.

We are also advising people travelling overseas to make sure they are fully immunised against measles before they go. In particular, the Ministry recommends that infants aged 6-15 months travelling to countries where there is a current measles outbreak be given MMR vaccine before they travel.

MMR can be given to infants aged 6-11 months if there is a high risk of exposure to measles. The vaccine given to this age group can be entered on the National Immunisation Register using your PMS high risk MMR vaccine option leaving the scheduled 15 month and 4 year MMR vaccine still to be given in the future as per the Immunisation Schedule. These younger infants will need two further doses of MMR as per the Immunisation Schedule as the effectiveness of the vaccine is lower in this age group. The additional vaccination at 6-11 months of age is funded as it meets eligibility criteria 3 and 4 for the funding of the MMR vaccine in the Pharmaceutical Schedule - <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/wwwtrs/ScheduleOnline.php?osg=priorix>.

The scheduled 15 month MMR dose can be given as early as 12 months and is funded as usual.

SafeTravel (<https://www.safetravel.govt.nz>) has added a message to their website advising all travellers to ensure that their measles vaccination is up to date prior to overseas travel.

For any further information, please consult the Communicable Disease Manual chapter regarding measles: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual/measles>

Ministry of Health measles information is available at:

<http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles>