



June 2019

## Managing measles in schools

**Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can be very serious. Northland DHB Public Health Unit (PHU) will work with you to manage any measles cases at your school.**

- Any child or staff member at your school who is suspected of having measles must be sent home until they are seen by a doctor. If measles is confirmed, they must remain at home away from any visitors, unless these visitors are known to be immune.
- If the case is confirmed with measles, PHU will ask your school for the details of any **close contacts** – those who have been in a confined space with the measles case.
- PHU will then advise **close contacts** (staff and children) to stay at home if they are not immune, and check for symptoms until the end of the quarantine period. This might be one to two weeks depending on when they were exposed to measles.
- PHU will also contact anyone at your school considered **at high risk** from measles, such as non-immune pregnant women, babies under 15 months old or anyone with a weakened immune system.

### What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms include a high fever, runny nose, cough and sore red eyes, followed several days later by a rash starting on the face and neck before spreading to the rest of the body. Someone with measles can spread it to others from five days before the rash appears until five days after.

### What do you do if you have a suspected case of measles at your school?

If you suspect measles because a student or staff member has a fever, rash or a number of the symptoms above, **isolate them away from others and send them home.**

The student or staff member will need to see a doctor and be cleared of measles before they can return to your school. **It's important that they, or their caregiver, ring ahead to let the health centre, hospital or A&E clinic know so they can be isolated** on arrival.

If the student or staff member is confirmed as having measles, they will need to stay at home **in isolation until five days after their rash first appeared.**

It's important to check you are up to date with your immunisations, especially if you're travelling overseas. See the [New Zealand Immunisation Schedule](#) for a list of free immunisations and the ages at which they're recommended.

Go to the DHB website [www.northlanddhb.org.nz](http://www.northlanddhb.org.nz) for more information about the signs and symptoms of measles and what to do if you are concerned or you can call the Public Health Unit on 0800 600 720.

## Could others at school be at risk?

You do not need to take further action unless PHU tells you there has been clinically confirmed measles case at your school. The service will discuss with you who is a **close contact** – someone who has been a confined space with the person with measles.

Staff and students are at risk of catching measles if they have **a) been in a confined space with the case AND b) are not immune.**

PHU will provide advice to **close contacts** on immunity, symptoms and quarantine.

## Who is immune?

*People are **immune and not at risk of measles** if they...*

- Have had one (ideally two) doses of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine documented in a Well Child/Tamariki Ora book or by a doctor.
- Were born before 1969, as they would very likely have had measles as a student
- Have been diagnosed with measles before
- Have had a blood test confirming immunity

*People are **not immune or are at risk of measles** if they...*

- Have had no doses of MMR vaccine
- Have a weakened immune system
- Have had a blood test that confirms they are not immune
- Are currently pregnant and not known to be immune