

Measles mumps rubella

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious viral diseases. You can catch them if you are exposed to the coughs and sneezes of an infected person. Most people recover fully from measles, mumps and rubella. However, when you do develop complications, they can be very serious. People still die from measles. Vaccination will protect you against all three diseases.

Facts about measles

- **Common symptoms** – fever, red blotchy rash which begins on the face and then becomes generalised, runny nose, cough, and sore red eyes.
- **Complications** – Pneumonia, encephalitis, otitis media croup, diarrhea.

Facts about mumps

- **Common symptoms** – fever, headache, swelling and tenderness of the salivary glands.
- **Complications** – painful swelling of the testicles affects about one in five adolescent and adult men. This may (in rare cases) lead to infertility. Mumps infection can cause permanent deafness.

Facts about rubella

- **Common symptoms** – rash, swollen glands, malaise.
- **Complications** - if you develop rubella while pregnant, your baby could be born with birth abnormalities including deafness, blindness, heart defects and intellectual disabilities.

One vaccine for all three diseases

The combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) is given at each of the following times:

- 12 months of age
- Four years of age
- Before you become pregnant, if blood tests show you are not immune to rubella.
- Adults born during or since 1966 should have evidence of having received two doses of MMR.

Pregnancy

You should not be given the vaccine if you are already pregnant and pregnancy should be avoided for 28 days after the vaccination.

Vaccine side effects are less serious than the disease

Possible side effects include:

- Feeling unwell – this is the most common side effect.
- Low grade fever and rash which occurs six to 11 days after the injection
- Mild facial swelling about three weeks after the injection.

Serious complications, such as inflammation of the brain, are very rare and probably only affect one in two million people, or less.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Department of Human Services Tel. (03) 9637 4000

Things to remember

- Measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious
- They can lead to serious complications or death
- You are more likely to develop serious side effects from the disease than from the vaccine.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by the Public Health Division of the Department of Human Services, Victoria. The Better Health Channel is part of the Department of Human Services, Victoria

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