



Health and Community Services

PROTECTION FROM MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA & VARICELLA (MMRV)

What is Measles?

Measles is a serious childhood disease. It begins like a common cold with fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes. A red blotchy rash appears 3-7 days later and fades away after 10 days. Measles can cause serious complications such as pneumonia, and ear infections, which may result in deafness, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and may cause brain damage. Death from measles occurs once in every 3,000 cases.

What is Mumps?

Mumps is a common childhood disease causing swelling of the salivary glands, the cheeks swell and chewing and swallowing become difficult. It may also be accompanied by fever, headache, and earache. Mumps is a mild disease but can sometimes cause meningitis encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and deafness. One out of every 20 females may develop inflammation of the ovaries. These complications can be very painful but usually do not cause sterility.

What is Rubella (German measles)?

Rubella is a mild disease with slight fever, rash and swelling of the glands in the back of the neck lasting about 3 days. Adult females may have pain and swelling of the joints lasting 1 or 2 weeks. However, if a pregnant woman gets rubella the unborn child can be seriously affected. The child may be born with heart problems, deafness or blindness, if exposed to rubella during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

What is Varicella (Chickenpox)?

Chickenpox is an illness that often affects children causing an itchy rash or blisters. People have the rash for several days and most get better without treatment. Some people get sick a more serious case of chickenpox and can be hospitalized.

Vaccination against Measles, Mumps, Rubella & Varicella

Measles, mumps, rubella & varicella (MMRV) can be prevented by receiving two doses of vaccine given at least one month apart. The MMRV vaccine is usually given just after the first birthday. At 18 months the child is given MMR. Currently the MMRV vaccine can be given to older children up to 12 years to protect them from these four diseases.

Reactions or Side Effects from MMRV Vaccine

While some people have no side effects after immunization, some possible reactions include the following:

- Soreness, redness, swelling at the site of the needle
- Rash resembling chickenpox (fewer than 10 spots) at the injection site
- Mild fever

Some people should not receive the MMRV vaccine. If you/your child has any of the following please check with the doctor or public/community health nurse:

- Sick with fever or infection
- Allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face, lips or throat; wheezing; shock; anaphylaxis) to neomycin or to a previous dose of measles vaccine
- Cancer, leukemia, lymphomas (cautions if there is close contact with someone who is having treatment or is immunocompromised)
- Receiving treatment with steroids
- Recently received immune globulin (IG) or other blood products
- Pregnancy

For additional information and services
contact your Regional Health Authority
listed in the white pages of your telephone
book.