



## MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA

### WHAT IS MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA?

**Measles**, is a highly infectious viral disease that still causes large outbreaks around the world, in both developed and developing countries. It is spread through respiratory secretions, including droplets in the air (in which the virus can survive for up to 2 hours). The incubation period varies from 10-14 days, followed by an early phase of the illness which produces fever and malaise over 2 to 4 days. An individual is infectious from the beginning of this early phase until around four days after a rash appears. The rash starts on the face then becomes widespread and is usually accompanied by a cough, cold symptoms and conjunctivitis. Complications such as ear infections and diarrhoea occur in 8-9 per cent of measles patients but one in 1000 cases will result in acute encephalitis with a 10-15 per cent death rate. Pneumonia due to measles infection is a serious complication in the young, killing 60% of those affected.

**Mumps**, caused by a virus, is known for the swollen salivary glands of the face, jaw and neck, however around one third of cases show no symptoms. After infection which is acquired through contact with saliva or respiratory secretions, the illness incubates within the body for 12-25 days, then produces symptoms including headaches, malaise, fever, muscle aches and loss of appetite. The infectious period commences 2 days before symptoms appear until 4 days after (but can be longer). While mumps will mostly resolve without incident, complications such as encephalitis occur in approximately 1-2 in 10,000 cases. Other serious outcomes from mumps depend on areas of the body involved: deafness, orchitis, oophoritis, hepatitis and pancreatitis.

**Rubella**, or German measles as it is more commonly known, is a usually mild viral illness that is spread through droplet or aerosol transmission. The virus incubates over a 2-3 week period and can be transmitted to non-immune individuals from 1 week before the appearance of a rash to 4 days after. Approximately half of all infections do not produce symptoms but, if they are apparent, they can include: red rash, swelling of glands around the neck and possibly joint aches and pains. Rubella is well known as being a risk to the unborn foetus if the mother contracts the virus, particularly during the first trimester. Infants affected in the uterus may be born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome, suffering issues such as deafness, heart abnormalities, cataracts and retarded growth, amongst others.

### WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Measles, mumps and rubella are all found worldwide.

### RISK TO TRAVELLERS

Risk is highest in those countries with low immunisation rates.

### WHAT IS MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA VACCINATION?

Australian children are vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella as part of the standard [childhood immunisation](#) schedule.

- Live attenuated viral vaccine - MMR
- Live attenuated viral vaccine - MMR combined with Varicella (Chickenpox)

Read more about [measles](#), [mumps](#) and [rubella](#) in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook.

## SCHEDULE

Australian children are vaccinated against MMR as part of the standard [childhood immunisation](#) schedule.

**Childhood schedule:** MMR at 12 months of age, then MMRV at 18 months of age completes the course. (MMRV vaccine is licensed for administration in children aged 14 years and under). Under special circumstances, such as travel to regions experiencing measles outbreaks or following exposure to the measles virus, the MMR vaccine is recommended for infants from 6 months of age. We advise that this information should be discussed with a medical practitioner.

For **Adults** who have no immunity - 2 doses of MMR vaccine at least 4 weeks apart. Adults born since 1966 may have only received one dose of MMR vaccine - 1 further dose needed.

**Contraindications:** Should not be administered to individuals who have previously experienced a serious reaction to this vaccine, who are known to be hypersensitive to any of the vaccine components or who are unable to receive a live vaccine.

## LEVEL OF PROTECTION

Over 95% effective after 2 doses of MMR-containing vaccine

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Generally mild but may include: redness, pain or swelling at injection site; fever; feeling unwell; rash (non-infectious); swelling of salivary glands; stiff neck; joint pains.

As with all vaccines, there is a small risk of allergic reaction.

**More information on Measles, Mumps and Rubella is available during your pre-travel consultation with Travelvax. Call 1300 360 164 for the location of the clinic nearest to you.**