

## Message from Toi Te Ora Public Health

A serious measles outbreak in Auckland has prompted the local Medical Officer of Health for the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts to urge local residents to check that they are up to date with their MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) immunisation before travelling to Auckland, particularly South Auckland.

“The size of the measles outbreak in South Auckland, and the fact that it continues to grow is really concerning. Immunisation uptake in our area is not currently high enough to prevent outbreaks here,” says Dr Jim Miller, Medical Officer of Health for Toi Te Ora Public Health. “Measles is a serious disease; almost half of the people who have had measles in our area this year have ended up in hospital.”

Immunisation is very effective in preventing measles. The vaccine that protects against measles is the MMR vaccine. This is usually given to children at 15 months of age with a booster at 4 years. “People planning to travel to Auckland or overseas with children under 15 months should ask their healthcare provider about earlier vaccination,” says Dr Miller. Adults born before 1969 are generally considered to be immune, but everyone else should be up to date with their MMR immunisation. Contact your doctor to book you or your child’s MMR immunisation, or to check to see if you are immune to measles.

“It is vital that you check whether you are at risk from measles. Otherwise you risk bringing measles home from your travels, or being part of our next local outbreak,” says Dr Miller.

Measles symptoms include a fever, runny nose, sore red eyes and cough, followed a few days later by a rash usually starting on the face before moving down the body.

If you think you or someone in your family may have measles, please stay at home and phone your doctor to alert them of your symptoms and allow them to make arrangements to assess you safely and without infecting other people.

Please do not just turn up to your GP, after hours or emergency department without first phoning ahead as you could potentially spread the virus to others. Alternatively, call Healthline on 0800 611 116 for advice.

For more information about measles go to:

- Toi Te Ora Public Health website: [www.toiteora.govt.nz/measles](http://www.toiteora.govt.nz/measles)
- Immunisation Advisory Centre: 0800 IMMUNE (466 863) or [www.immune.org.nz](http://www.immune.org.nz)
- Ministry of Health 2019 measles outbreak information: [www.health.govt.nz/.../meas.../2019-measles-outbreak-information](http://www.health.govt.nz/.../meas.../2019-measles-outbreak-information)