

MEASLES, MUMPS AND RUBELLA (MMR) VACCINE

What is the measles, mump and rubella (MMR) vaccine?

The MMR vaccine protects against three diseases: measles, mumps and rubella (german measles). The vaccine is approved by Health Canada and is provided free as part of the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule for children and adults.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is the best way to protect against measles, mumps and rubella. These diseases can cause serious illness and complications, including death. When you or your child are immunized, you also help protect those around you.

How is the vaccine given?

The MMR vaccine is given as an injection into the upper arm.

Who should receive the vaccine?

In New Brunswick, a combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is provided to children and adults through the New Brunswick Routine Immunization Schedule.

- A combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) is provided to children in a series of two doses. The first dose is usually administered at 12 months of age and the second at 18 months. Children born in 2009 and later are eligible to receive the combined measles, mumps, rubella and varicella vaccine (MMRV). The vaccine is given at the same time as other routine childhood immunizations.
- Individuals born in 1970 or later who have not previously received two doses of MMR vaccine are eligible to receive two doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR).

Adults who are born before 1970 and those with documented history of natural infection are considered immune.

Who should not receive the vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given if you or your child:

- had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine in the past;
- are allergic to any of the ingredients of the vaccine or its container, including gelatin or neomycin;
- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant less than one month of receiving the vaccine.

Speak with your health-care provider if you or your child have a weakened immune system or had a blood transfusion or received other blood products within the last three to 11 months as vaccination may need to be delayed.

What are the possible reactions after receiving the vaccine?

The most common reactions include soreness, redness and/or swelling where the vaccine was given. Up to one in ten people may experience a fever, irritability or a rash that can be blotchy red like measles or rubella. Uncommon reactions (up to one person in 100) may include swelling of the glands in the neck, cheek, armpit or groin, diarrhea, vomiting, tiredness and feeling unwell.

With any vaccine there is an extremely rare possibility (less than one in a million people) of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. For this reason, it is important to remain in the clinic for 15 minutes after receiving the MMR vaccine. Signs of this reaction may include rash, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated.

What can be done for reactions to the vaccine?

- A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.
- For discomfort and fever, you or your child may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®) according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Aspirin (ASA) should NOT be given to children younger than 18 years due to its link to Reye's syndrome.
- Any unexpected or serious reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health-care provider.

What else you need to know.

Inform your immunization provider if you or your child have any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will provide you with an immunization record. Keep this record in a safe place and bring it with you at the next immunization visit.

If you or your child have any unusual reactions to the vaccine, or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your health-care provider.

Consult your health care provider or a travel clinic before you or your loved ones travel to ensure you are up to date with your immunization. During outbreaks or for travel to regions where measles is a concern, the vaccine may be given as early as six months of age. Under these circumstances, the routine two dose series must be then restarted on or after the first birthday, for a total of three doses.

Further Information

In New Brunswick, the publicly funded MMR vaccine is provided through your local [Public Health office](#) or health care-provider.

For further information contact your health-care provider, local Public Health office or Tele-Care (811).

Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick www.gnb.ca/health
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion www.immunize.cpha.ca.
- Public Health Agency of Canada www.phac-aspc.gc.ca