



# MMR VACCINE

## (MEASLES / MUMPS / RUBELLA)

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



 **MMR Vaccine should NOT be given in case of pregnancy at the time of the planned vaccination. Women should not get pregnant during both months following the vaccination.** 

### 1. What is MMR (Measles / Mumps / Rubella)

- **M** (measles) is caused by a virus causing cough, runny nose, eye irritation and fever. Measles can lead to ear infection, pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and rarely death.
- **M** (mumps) is caused by a virus causing fever, headache and swollen glands. Mumps can lead to deafness, meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord covering), painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries which can result in infertility, and rarely death.
- **R** (Rubella) is also caused by a virus causing rash, mild fever, and arthritis (mostly in women).  
**If a woman contracts rubella while she is pregnant, she may have a miscarriage or her baby may be born with serious birth defects.**

### 2. How can it be transmitted and prevented?

The diseases can be caught by being around someone who is suffering from them. They spread very easily from person to person through the air.

- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine can prevent these diseases.

**MMR is a vaccine made of live but weakened forms of natural measles, mumps and rubella viruses**

### 3. Who should get MMR vaccine and when?

- All children 12 months of age and older and teenagers should receive 2 doses of MMR:  
- The first dose should be given at 12-15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age.
- Generally, anyone 18 years of age or older **and born after 1957** should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine unless they have had the vaccine before or have suffered from these diseases.
- Women of any age **planning to become pregnant** and who do not have evidence of immunity.
- Health care workers born after 1957 without evidence of immunity.

### 4. Who should not get MMR vaccine?

- People who have had a life threatening allergic reaction to the antibiotic neomycin or to a previous dose of MMR vaccine.
- People who are moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should wait until they recover before getting vaccinated.
- **Pregnant women should wait until after they have given birth before getting MMR vaccine. Women should avoid getting pregnant for 2 months after receiving MMR vaccine.**
- Some people should check with their doctor about getting the vaccine, e.g.:  
- Anyone who has a weakened immune system because of HIV/AIDS or another disease that affects

the immune system.

- Anyone who is undergoing treatment with drugs that affect the immune system, such as steroids.
- Anyone who has cancer or is undergoing cancer treatment with radiation or drugs.
- Anyone who ever had a low platelet count (blood disorders).

## 5. What are the risks from MMR vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. ***The risk of MMR vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.***

***Getting MMR vaccine is much safer than getting the diseases!***

### ***Mild problems:***

- fever (up to 1 person out of 6)
- mild rash (about 1 person out of 20)
- swelling of glands in the cheeks or neck (rare)

### ***Moderate problems:***

- seizure caused by fever (1 out of 3000 vaccinated persons)
- temporary pain and stiffness in the joints, mostly in teenage or adult women (1 out of 4 vaccinated persons)
- temporary low platelet count (1 out of 30000 vaccinated persons)

### ***Severe problems (very rare):***

- serious allergic reaction (1 out of a million vaccinated persons)
- several other severe problems like deafness, long term seizures, coma or unconsciousness and permanent brain damage but experts are not sure whether they are caused by the vaccine or not.

## 6. What if there is a moderate or severe reaction ?

### ***What should I look for?***

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavioral changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness of the voice or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

### ***What should I do?***

- Call a doctor or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.

## 7. How can I learn more ?

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Contact the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
Visit the CDC's website at: [www.cdc.gov/nip](http://www.cdc.gov/nip)