

Measles Outbreak

As you will no doubt be aware the current outbreak of measles in New Zealand has spread significantly, particularly in the Auckland area.

Click [here](#) for a document from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) designed for Early Learning Services.

It's important to remember that the first signs of measles are not a rash. If a member of your Playcentre community experiences any of these early symptoms:

- a cough
- a fever
- a runny nose
- sore and watery pink eyes

they should stay away from Playcentre (and other public spaces) and contact Healthline on 0800 611 116 for medical advice.

The measles virus can live for up to 2 hours in the air, or on infected surfaces, after that time it can no longer be transmitted.

To be proactive, centres should ensure that their immunisation records are up to date – your CA can support with this.

- If a member of your centre is found to have contracted measles, then please contact your Regional office and the Ministry of Health for advice and support on establishing quarantine periods, and notifying members.
- If your child develops a high fever, runny nose, cough, sore red eyes, or a rash, please see a doctor (call ahead to alert your doctor about the possibility of measles before visiting).
- If there is a confirmed case of measles connected to someone who attends a Playcentre we will be alerted by the authorities and the Regional Office will work with your centre to implement the appropriate protocols.

Measles FAQ

What happens if there is a possible case at Playcentre

- What do we do if person at our centre is exposed to the Measles virus?
 - If they are fully immunised you don't need to do anything.
 - If they are unimmunised, they should have been advised to go into quarantine.

People exposed to the virus do not have to let others know that they are in quarantine. However, many parents will choose to disclose this information. In this instance, please contact your Regional Office who can guide you through the next steps.

- What do we do if a person at our centre has been diagnosed with measles?
 - Contact your Regional Office ASAP, who will liaise with Health officials to ensure that you are meeting all requirements and guide you through the next steps.
 - Read this [Resource kit for Early Learning Services](#) available on the Auckland Regional Public Health Service website
- What do we do if someone becomes ill while at Playcentre?
 - The early signs of measles are a cough, high fever, runny nose and sore red eyes. It is best to ask anyone displaying these symptoms to avoid coming to centre during this time, and seek medical advice if they are concerned.
 - Any child or member at your centre who is suspected of having measles must be sent home until they are seen by a doctor. If measles is confirmed, they should not return to your centre until after the end of the 4th day from the rash (day 0 is the day the rash began).

Unvaccinated people at Playcentre

- What do we say if someone asks if there are unvaccinated people at our centre?
 - Generally, we can safely say that the answer to that question is yes, because Playcentre enrolls from birth to 6 years
- Parents want to know who is unvaccinated in our centre, can we tell them?
 - No. Disclosing that information to members or to the public would be in breach of the Privacy Act. We gather information on immunity to ensure that vulnerable children are able to be protected in cases of notifiable illnesses. We do not gather information on the parents/adults, and cannot require them to tell us unless directed by officials. Authorised representatives of the Ministry of Health or Playcentre Aotearoa may request to see this information if there is a concern at your centre. If you are uncertain, please contact your Regional

Office or CSW for more support.

- Can we stop people who are unvaccinated from coming to our Playcentre?
 - If there has not been a case of infectious disease at your Playcentre, even if the disease is circulating in your community, tamariki can NOT be excluded just because they are not vaccinated. Tamariki and adults cannot be prevented from attending unless they are at risk and directed by the Medical Officer of Health (Health Act) because they have been exposed to a disease through contact or transmission through air.
- Can we ask or require all parents/adults coming to the centre to ensure they are vaccinated?
 - Legally we cannot require them to be vaccinated. If the Medical Officer of Health directs us to, due to a direct risk at the Playcentre, then people would be required to prove vaccination before being allowed to attend.

Getting Vaccinated

- At what age can my baby be vaccinated?
 - In some cases, babies aged 6-12 months are now able to be immunised against measles. See the immunisation advisory centre website for more info: https://www.immune.org.nz/hot-topic/measles-overseas-and-new-zealand?fbclid=IwAR3gf2HyWtm8fTKMXmqquQeklhi2_yrl6mqGAHhUw-7egqSGQBqVPwFZY6A
- If a 6-month-old baby gets vaccinated and comes to the SPACE programme/Playcentre, can the live virus shed off them and infect another baby?
 - No it cannot

Privacy Concerns

- Who should have access to the Centre's Immunisation Register?
 - Every centre should appoint a Privacy Officer (if they haven't already). This could be tied into one of the other roles in the centre – such as the person who looks after enrolments. There should be a maximum of 2 people appointed as Privacy Officers
 - The Privacy officer should be the only centre member who accesses the immunisation register information, and only accesses this as necessary to alert vulnerable individuals if there is an outbreak in the centre *or to update the register with new information*

- Regional employees can access the immunisation register as required for their roles – e.g. the Centre Administrator requires access to immunisation information in order to keep it up to date on the Student Management System.
- We have information about who is vaccinated or not, why can't we share it?
 - This information is collected as part of the enrolment form and is required to be kept up to date as part of being an early childhood service. However, when you collect any information it must only be used for the purpose for which it was collected. In this instance immunisation information is collected so that in the situation of an infectious disease being within the Playcentre, you are able to more quickly contact those who might be at risk. It can be used for that purpose, but not for any other reasons. Reassuring or alerting other members/ potential members about the status of children in your centre is not the reason this information was collected.

Here are some helpful links that we suggest you familiarise yourself with if you are concerned

Ministry of Health website:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles>

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) website:

<https://www.arphs.health.nz/public-health-topics/disease-and-illness/measles/>