



Media release

20 September 2019

Temporary management of MMR vaccine in metropolitan Auckland

Please attribute to a spokesperson for the Waitematā, Auckland, and Counties Manukau DHBs

The measles outbreak has led to unprecedented demand for the Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

While it is good news that so many people living in Auckland have been vaccinated in recent weeks, we now need to carefully manage the current supply of MMR across the region. This includes our share of the 52,000 doses that recently arrived in New Zealand.

For this reason the three District Health Boards (Waitematā, Auckland and Counties Manukau) are working with Auckland's Primary Health Organisations to ensure the vaccine we have gets to where it is most needed.

We have informed Auckland general practices that most of our current vaccine must be used to give babies and children their scheduled 12 month and four year MMR vaccinations.

Children are most seriously affected by measles and our first priority is to protect them.

General Practitioners (GPs) can also use their clinical judgement to provide vaccine to people aged 5-29 who are more vulnerable in this outbreak. In the current outbreak, measles is spreading among young Pacific and Māori people and high numbers of these groups have needed hospital care.

These groups are a priority for GPs to consider vaccinating based on their clinical judgement. GPs can also use their clinical judgement to vaccinate babies aged six months to 12 months.

People aged 30-50 are currently not a priority for vaccination. However, clinical judgement may be needed on a case-by-case basis. Once we have more vaccine in stock we will be able to provide vaccinations for those 30-50 years who want to be vaccinated.

We know that having to wait for an MMR vaccination may cause concern. However we want to reassure people that the Ministry of Health and PHARMAC have advised us that an additional 100,000 doses of vaccine have been secured for New Zealand. We expect this vaccine to arrive in the next few months.

It is very difficult for any doctor or nurse to ask a patient to wait for a vaccination, but it is essential we work together to manage our supplies very carefully – so that we have MMR available for babies and young children.

We thank the public for their patience and ask them to understand that their general practice is doing all that they can to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

Temporary priorities for MMR vaccine in Auckland

- General practices have been asked to keep most of their vaccine for children aged under five years at the moment.
- GPs may also vaccinate some people aged under 30 who have not had any MMR vaccinations, based on their clinical judgement.
- In this outbreak Pacific and Māori people are more seriously affected by measles than other groups and are a priority for vaccination.

Measles cases in Auckland as at 8.30am, 20 September 2019

- As of today, the total number of confirmed measles cases in Auckland is 1151, up 14 from yesterday.
- Of this total, 790 of the cases are in the Counties Manukau Health area, with Waitemātā and Auckland DHBs having 190 and 171 cases respectively.

-Ends-

For further information please call the Auckland DHB media line on 09 375 3499.