



5 July, 2019

Protecting our communities from the measles outbreak

Between 11 June and 28 June 2019, an estimated 1,555 Auckland infants received their first dose of MMR as a result of Auckland Regional Public Health Service's (ARPHS) decision to lower the age from 15 to 12 months.

In addition, more than 700 infants within the same age range who were already scheduled and/or eligible to receive their first dose of MMR were also vaccinated during this time. This brings the total number of infants (aged 12 to 15 months in June 2019) vaccinated to 2,324 across the region. A follow-up dose is also required at four years of age.

"Vaccination is the best form of protection from measles, which is a highly-contagious virus that can result in serious illness and death," says Waitematā DHB paediatrician Dr Tim Jelleyman.

"We strongly encourage the parents and guardians of children aged 12 months and older to visit their GP for a free MMR vaccination to give them the best chance of avoiding the virus, particularly as we are in the midst of an outbreak."

Measles can be difficult to diagnose prior to the appearance of the characteristic red, blotchy rash that typically appears a few days after the person contracts the virus.

ARPHS is asking people to watch for a fever, cough, runny nose and sore red eyes, followed by a rash that starts on the face and neck before moving down the body.

We encourage anyone who suspects they have measles to phone ahead before presenting to the emergency department.

Visit the ARPHS website: <https://www.arphs.health.nz> for an update on measles in Auckland.

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