

Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella (Chickenpox) (MMR-Var) Vaccine

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger by building antibodies, which help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

Who should have MMR-Var vaccine?

The vaccine is given to children starting at 12 months of age. It is only used for children 12 years and younger.

It is also given to infants 9 to 11 months of age who have certain health conditions.

How many doses of this vaccine are needed?

Children need 2 doses which are usually given at 12 months and between 4 and 6 years of age.

How well does the vaccine work?

After 2 doses, protection is estimated to be:

- almost 100% for measles
- 76% to 95% for mumps
- over 95% for rubella
- 98% for varicella

Where can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is given at a public health office in your area.

Are there side effects from the vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are usually mild and go away in a few days. Reactions may happen up to 6 weeks after immunization. They may include:

- redness, swelling, and discomfort where the needle was given
- fever
- feeling irritable
- diarrhea, vomiting
- upper respiratory infection
- measles-like rash (blotchy red) or chickenpox-like rash (water blisters)

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after immunization because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Unusual reactions can happen after being immunized. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with discomfort and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area.
- If you need fever or pain medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- If you get a chickenpox-like rash, keep it covered with clothing. If the rash cannot be covered, stay away from pregnant women, newborn babies whose mothers have not had chickenpox, and people with weak immune systems. If there are more than 50 spots, call Health Link at 811.
- Some people with health problems (e.g., weak immune system) must call their doctor whenever they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor—even if you think the fever was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have MMR-Var vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this vaccine (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if you have had reactions.
- have a weak immune system – you need to check with your doctor before getting this vaccine.
- had a blood product within the past year or another live vaccine within the past 3 months—check with a public health nurse as your vaccine may need to be delayed.

You can be immunized if you have a mild illness (e.g., cold), even if you have a fever.

For More Information



Call Health Link at 811



Go to immunizealberta.ca



Go to myhealth.alberta.ca

Disease Quick Facts

Measles

- highly infectious virus that causes a high fever, blotchy rash, cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- 1 in 10 people will get infections of the middle ear or lungs
- 1 in 1000 people will get encephalitis (infection of the brain) which can lead to seizures, deafness or brain damage
- 1 to 2 of every 1000 people may die
- spread easily through the air

Mumps

- virus that causes fever, headache, and swelling of the glands around the jaw
- some people have no symptoms but can spread the disease
- can cause swelling of the testicles (boys/men) or ovaries (girls/women), deafness, or encephalitis (infection of the brain)
- spread by coughing, sneezing or contact with saliva (e.g. kissing, sharing food, sharing toys)

Rubella (German Measles)

- virus that causes fever, sore throat, swollen neck glands and red rash
- usually mild, but can cause painful, swollen joints, encephalitis (infection of the brain), or a bleeding disorder
- if a woman gets rubella while pregnant, she may have a miscarriage or the baby may be born with disabilities
- spread by coughing or sneezing

Varicella (Chickenpox)

- virus that causes fever and an itchy rash that looks like small water blisters
- usually mild, but up to 1 in 10 people can have skin infections, pneumonia, blood infections, or other life-threatening infections
- most serious in newborns, adults, and people with weak immune systems
- spread easily through the air by coughing or sneezing or by touching open blisters