

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

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

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

What is the MMR-Var vaccine?

The MMR-Var vaccine protects against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

Who should get the MMR-Var vaccine?

- Children starting at age 12 months up to and including 12 years get this vaccine. You do not get this vaccine if you are older than 12 years.
- Babies age 9 to 11 months who are having an organ transplant may also get this vaccine. Babies younger than 9 months do not get this vaccine.

How many doses do I need?

Children need 2 doses. As of January 1, 2021, children get their first dose at age 12 months and the second dose at age 18 months. If your child did not get an MMR-Var vaccine at age 18 months, they will get it at age 4 years.

Are there other vaccines that protect against measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox?

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. The VZ vaccine protects against chickenpox.

How well does the vaccine work?

After 2 doses, protection is about:

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

Where can I get the MMR-Var vaccine?

You can get the vaccine at a public health office in your area.

Are there side effects from the MMR-Var vaccine?

There can be side effects from the MMR-Var vaccine. They tend to be mild and go away in a few days, but side effects can happen up to 6 weeks after having this vaccine. They may include:

- redness, swelling, bruising, rash, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- getting upset easily
- a fever
- vomiting (throwing up) or loose stool (diarrhea)
- a measles-like rash (a blotchy, red rash), rubella-like rash (rash with red, raised bumps), or chickenpox-like rash (rash with water-filled blisters)

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where your child had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your child's doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to give. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.
- If your child gets a rash that looks like chickenpox, keep it covered. If you cannot cover your child's rash, stay away from anyone who is pregnant, newborn babies, and people with weak immune systems. If your child has more than 50 spots, call Health Link at 811.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your child's doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

Who should not get the MMR-Var vaccine?

Your child may not be able to get this vaccine if they:

- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- have a weak immune system (because of medicine you take or a health problem)
- have a family history of a weak immune system
- had a blood product in the past 12 months
- had another live vaccine in the past 3 months
- have seizures or a family history of seizures
- are pregnant

Your child can still get the vaccine if they have a mild illness such as a cold or fever. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

Check with your child's doctor or a public health nurse before they get the vaccine.

For More Information



Call Health Link at 811



Go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://immunizealberta.ca)



Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)

Facts about measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox)

What is measles?

Measles is a virus that spreads easily through the air when someone who has measles coughs or sneezes. It can cause:

- a high fever
- a cough
- a runny nose
- red eyes
- a blotchy, red rash

Measles can be dangerous because:

- One in 10 people with measles will get middle ear or lung infections
- One in 1,000 people will get encephalitis (infection of the brain), which can lead to seizures, deafness, or brain damage
- One to 2 of every 1,000 people with measles could die

What is mumps?

Mumps is a virus that spreads by coughing, sneezing, or contact with saliva (such as kissing or sharing toys). You can have no symptoms but still spread mumps. It can cause:

- a fever
- a headache
- swelling of the glands around your jaw
- swelling of the testicles or ovaries
- deafness
- encephalitis (infection of the brain)

What is rubella?

Rubella is a virus that spreads by coughing or sneezing. It is usually mild. It can cause:

- a fever
- a sore throat
- swollen neck glands
- a rash with red, raised bumps
- painful, swollen joints
- encephalitis (infection of the brain)
- a bleeding disorder

If you get rubella while you are pregnant, it can cause a miscarriage (loss of a baby before 20 weeks of pregnancy) or the baby may be born with disabilities.

What is varicella (chickenpox)?

Chickenpox is a virus that can cause a fever and an itchy rash that looks like small water-filled blisters. It spreads easily through the air by coughing, sneezing, or by touching open blisters.

It is usually mild, but can be more serious in newborns, adults, and people with weak immune systems. Up to 1 in 10 people who get chickenpox can have:

- skin infections
- pneumonia (a type of lung infection)
- blood infections
- other life-threatening (deadly) infections