



## NT Health

### **Public health alert: Territorians urged to get vaccinated against measles ahead of Easter holidays**

22 March 2023

NT Health is issuing a warning about measles ahead of the upcoming Easter holidays following a rise in cases overseas and interstate.

Measles outbreaks are occurring in the USA and Europe, while the virus remains common in countries across Asia, Africa and in the Middle East. Cases of measles have recently been diagnosed in returned overseas travellers in other Australian states and territories, as well as in New Zealand.

The most recent cases of measles in the Northern Territory were in 2019, when 31 were recorded.

Vaccination is the best protection against measles and help to prevent outbreaks from occurring. Two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine are required for immunity against measles and are given to children in Australia at 12 and 18 months of age.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection that can lead to serious complications including pneumonia and inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). Ear infections and diarrhoea are also common and many people diagnosed with measles will end up hospitalised.

With an expected increase in travel during the Easter Holidays in early April, it is timely Territorians ensure they are protected against measles as soon as possible, as it takes around two weeks after vaccination to develop immunity.

It is strongly advised the following groups get a measles vaccination:

- adults who are born after 1966 and do not have two documented vaccinations against measles or evidence of previous measles infection
- babies over the age of 12 months who have not started their MMR immunisation.

MMR vaccines are free for people who have not already had two doses and the vaccine can be accessed through GPs, community care centres and Aboriginal medical services.

Measles symptoms begin one to two weeks after exposure to someone with the virus and include fever, runny nose, cough and red/watery eyes. At three to five days after the first symptoms develop a red, blotchy rash appears, usually starting on the face and spreading down the body.

To minimise the risk of contracting measles, people should:

- check their vaccination status by looking at their Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) records or immunisation record as a child
- book an appointment with a health provider if they are not fully vaccinated or are unsure if they have had two measles vaccines
- ensure children are protected against measles
- encourage others in the community to check their vaccination status.

Learn more at [Measles | NT.GOV.AU](https://www.nt.gov.au/health/communicable-diseases/measles/)

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