

MMR vaccine

Information for parents of children aged 6 months and older and adults

What is the name of the MMR vaccine?

The name of the MMR vaccine is either Priorix or MMRVaxPro.

What diseases does the MMR vaccine protect against?

The MMR vaccine protects you or your child against measles, mumps and rubella (also called German measles).

Measles, mumps and rubella are caused by viruses and are highly infectious diseases. They are spread when the virus is passed from somebody who has the disease to somebody who has no protection against it.

Disease	Common Symptoms	Possible Complications
Measles	Fever Rash Red and painful eyes	Encephalitis (swelling of the brain) Pneumonia Bronchitis Ear infections
Mumps	Painful swollen glands under the jaw and fever	Meningitis Deafness Swollen, painful testicles in adult males
Rubella (German measles)	Fever and a rash	If a pregnant woman gets rubella, her baby may suffer from major birth defects including blindness, brain damage, deafness, heart problems and other serious complications

When is MMR vaccine usually given?

In Ireland, children are given their first MMR vaccine at 12 months of age. Children get a second dose when they are 4-5 years of age usually in primary school. Two doses of MMR vaccine give the best protection.

If your child has never had MMR vaccine before, they should get a dose as soon as possible and a second dose 1 month after the first dose.

Adults who have never had MMR vaccine before should also get a dose as soon as possible and a second dose a month later.

Close contacts of cases of measles

Measles is a very infectious disease. If you have not been vaccinated or had measles infection in the past, it is very likely you will become infected if you are in contact with a case. If you have been in close contact with a case of measles you may be recommended by public health doctors to receive an MMR vaccine. This should help reduce the chance you will develop measles.

Can children younger than 12 months get MMR vaccine?

If there is an outbreak of measles, MMR vaccine may be recommended for your child from the age of 6 months to help protect them against measles. If your child gets an MMR vaccine when they are less than 12 months old, they still need to get a dose of vaccine at 12 months of age. This is to give them the best protection. They should have another dose at age 4-5 years.

Usually MMR vaccine is given at 12 months of age because the vaccine works best in this age.

Women who are planning pregnancy

If you are planning to become pregnant it is recommended that you receive one dose of MMR vaccine before pregnancy, if you have never had the vaccine before. This will protect you against rubella infection in pregnancy, which can cause serious medical problems to your baby if you become infected.

Are there any people who should not get the MMR vaccine?

There are very few people who should not get the MMR vaccine. People should not get the vaccine if:

- they have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous MMR vaccine, any part of the vaccine
- have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to neomycin or gelatin which are contained in MMR vaccine.
- babies under 12 months should not receive MMR vaccine if their mother was taking a medicine called Children infliximab throughout the pregnancy.
- babies who are being breastfed by mothers taking infliximab.

If you are pregnant, you should not get the MMR vaccine. You should delay getting pregnant for 1 month after receiving the vaccine. You can breastfeed safely after getting the MMR vaccine

Delay getting the MMR vaccine if the person getting vaccinated:

- is ill with a high fever
- is on a high dose of medicines called corticosteroids
- is having treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- has an illness or disease that affects their immune system.

Your doctor or nurse can advise you if you need to delay getting vaccinated

Is there a link between the MMR vaccine and autism?

No. Research has shown that there is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Does the MMR vaccine have any side-effects?

Most people have no problem after this vaccine.

Some people get an area of soreness, swelling and redness where the injection was given. Rarely children may get “mini measles” with a rash and fever 6 to 10 days later. Children may get “mini-mumps” with swelling in the jaw area in the third week after vaccination. These are not contagious and pass after a few days. You can give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve aches and pains or to lower fever.

More Information

If you have any questions or queries, please discuss them with your vaccinator or a doctor or nurse.

Visit www.immunisation.ie to read more information about vaccines. Visit www.hpsc.ie for information about these infectious diseases.

You can also find links to the patient information leaflets for the vaccines at www.hpra.ie. Search for Priorix or MMRVaxPro (MMR) to read the relevant patient information leaflet.