



Dear Member

Local outbreak of measles – what you need to know and do

IN SHORT

- Measles is a highly contagious viral infection – an infected person is contagious from around four days before the appearance of the rash until four days after.
- Measles impacts children more severely, but adults can also be affected. It can lead to serious complications.
- A measles vaccination provides up to 95% protection against the virus. For the few that still contract the infection, symptoms are generally milder and less dangerous than for those who are unvaccinated.
- Most people in our country are already vaccinated against this disease, as a measles vaccination forms part of the national vaccination programme for children, with a first shot usually given at six months of age and another at twelve months of age.
- **The Department of Health is currently providing additional booster vaccine doses to children under the age of 15 years to curb the spread.**

ACTION REQUIRED

- **Review your children's vaccination records.** If they have not been fully vaccinated against measles, arrange to have a measles vaccination. This is especially important in the case of young children, who may have missed their routine vaccinations due to COVID-19 disrupting our lives. But it is never too late to vaccinate – children who have not been vaccinated may receive measles vaccine at any age over 6 months, and free of charge at primary health services.
- If you prefer to have your children receive the booster vaccine privately instead of through the Department of Health's campaign, you can **arrange with your local pharmacy to have the booster vaccine administered.** The cost of such a booster will be funded from your overall annual limit and will not deplete your day-to-day benefits.
- **Be on the lookout for measles symptoms.** Measles symptoms generally become noticeable 10-14 days after contact with the virus (the incubation period). Initial symptoms typically include fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. A few days later the characteristic measles rash may appear. The rash usually appears as a flat red spot on the face or head, which then spreads downwards to the rest of the body.
- Should you or your children present with symptoms, you are encouraged to **contact your GP** as soon as possible for further guidance and/or treatment.

Regards,

