



DATE:

Dear Resident

The Department of Public Health has been notified of a measles outbreak in [insert facility/hotel name here].

Measles is a serious viral infection that causes **fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes followed a few days later by a rash that starts on the head and spreads downwards over the face, neck and body**. More information on measles is available in Appendix A.



Eyes of a child with measles



Face of a child with measles



Measles rash day 3

Measles is highly contagious. If you have any of the symptoms described above it is very important that you **stay in your room and avoid contact with other people** in order to prevent transmission.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles. If you have been exposed to measles and have not previously been vaccinated, **vaccination with MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine within 72 hours of your exposure may provide protection**.

The HSE (the Irish health service) will provide MMR vaccination for you and/or your children free of charge.

For more information on what to do if you have been exposed to measles please read Appendix B.

Appendix A

What is measles?

Measles is a serious viral infection that causes **fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes followed a few days later by a rash that starts on the head and spreads downwards over the face, neck and body**. Occasionally measles can have serious complications including chest infections, seizures, ear infections, inflammation of the brain and brain damage. Measles is most dangerous for children under one year of age, pregnant women, and people with poor immunity.

How is measles spread?

Measles is **highly infectious** and spreads through the air. It can be spread by coughing and sneezing or close personal contact. A person infected with measles is most infectious from 4 days before the rash appears to 4 days afterwards. The incubation period is usually around 10-12 days but may be up to 21 days.

What can you do to protect yourself and/or your children from measles?

Vaccination

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine provides protection against measles. All children in Ireland are recommended to have 2 doses of MMR, the first at 12 months and the second at 4-5 years. MMR vaccine given within 72 hours of exposure to measles may provide protection.

Appendix B

If you and/or your children have been in contact with a case of measles:

Children

- If your child is aged over 12 months **has not yet received MMR vaccination**, he/she should have one dose of MMR vaccine now and a second dose in a month's time.
- If your child is aged over 12 months and **has had one MMR vaccination already** he/she should receive their second MMR as soon as possible. A period of at least 1 month should elapse between the first and second dose of MMR.
- If your child is aged 6 to 12 months he/she should receive one dose of MMR vaccine now. Your child will still need a second dose at ≥ 12 months (a period of one month should elapse between the first and second doses) and a third dose at 4 to 5 years.
- If your child **has had two MMR vaccinations already**, no further action is required.

Adults

- If you **have never received MMR vaccination**, you should receive one dose of MMR vaccine now and a second dose in a month's time.
- If you have already **had one dose of MMR vaccine**, you should receive a second dose as soon as possible. A period of one month should elapse between the first and second dose
- If you have had **two MMR vaccinations already**, no further action is required.

The HSE (the Irish health service) will provide MMR vaccination for you and/or your children free of charge.

Immunoglobulin

Children younger than 6 months, pregnant women who are not immune to measles and people with weakened immunity may require immunoglobulin to protect them from measles. This is usually administered in a hospital day ward. If you require immunoglobulin a referral to the appropriate hospital setting will be made on your behalf.

Preventing transmission of measles

If you or your child have been diagnosed with or have symptoms suggestive of measles you should **stay in your room until 4 days after the onset of the rash** in order to avoid transmitting it to others.

Unvaccinated children who have been exposed to measles should stay at home/in their rooms (not mixing with others in childcare, school or social settings) for the duration of the incubation period, which may be up to 21 days. This is to ensure that they do not transmit infection to other children who may be too young for vaccination or be at increased risk due to other conditions.

Unvaccinated adults who have been exposed to measles should avoid unnecessary contact with people. If you work with people who are at high risk from measles infection e.g. if you are a healthcare worker or work in childcare or in a school, you may be advised to stay at home from work for the duration of the incubation period, which may be up to 21 days.