

MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA AND VARICELLA (MMRV) VACCINE

What is the measles, mump, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine?

The MMRV vaccine protects against four diseases: measles, mumps, rubella (german measles) and varicella (chicken pox).

The vaccine is approved by Health Canada and is provided free as part of the Routine New Brunswick Immunization Schedule for children.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

The MMRV vaccine is the best way to protect against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella. These diseases can cause serious illness and complications, including death. When your child is immunized, he or she also helps to protect others.

How is the vaccine given?

The MMRV vaccine is given as an injection into the thigh or upper arm.

Who should receive the vaccine?

In New Brunswick, the vaccine is provided to children as a series of two doses. The first dose is given at 12 months of age and the second at 18 months. The vaccine is given at the same time as other routine childhood immunizations.

Who should not receive the vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given if your child:

- had a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine previously; or
- is allergic to any of the ingredients of the vaccine or its container.

Speak with your health-care provider if your child has a weakened immune system or had a blood transfusion or received other blood products within the last three to 11 months as vaccination may need to be delayed.

What are the possible reactions after receiving the vaccine?

The most common reactions include soreness, redness, or swelling where the vaccine was given. Up to one in ten children may experience a fever, irritability or a rash that can be blotchy red like measles or rubella, or blister-like varicella.

Uncommon reactions (up to one person in 100) may include a swelling of the glands in the neck, cheek, armpit or groin, diarrhea, vomiting, tiredness and feeling unwell. Some people may have reactions similar to those that occur with the separate MMR and varicella vaccines.

With any vaccine there is an extremely rare possibility (less than one in a million people) of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. For this reason, it is important to remain in the clinic for 15 minutes after receiving the MMRV vaccine. Signs of this reaction may include rash, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated.

What can be done for reactions to the vaccine?

- A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.
- For discomfort and fever, you may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®) according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Aspirin (ASA) should **NOT** be given to children younger than 18 years due to its link to Reye's syndrome.

Any unexpected or serious reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health-care provider.

What else you need to know.

Inform your immunization provider if your child has any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will give you a record of your child's immunization. Keep this record in a safe place and bring it with you when your child is next due for immunization.

If your child has any unusual reactions to the vaccine, or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your health-care provider.

Consult your health care provider or a travel clinic before you or your loved ones travel to ensure you are up to date with your immunization. During outbreaks or for travel to regions where measles is a concern, the vaccine may be given as early as six months of age. Under these circumstances, the routine two dose series must be then restarted on or after the first birthday, for a total of three doses.

Further Information

In New Brunswick, the publicly funded MMRV vaccine is provided to children at age 12 and 18 months through your local Public Health office or health-care provider.

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, [local Public Health office](#) or Tele-Care 811.

Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick <http://www.gnb.ca/health>
- Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion <http://www.immunize.cpha.ca>
- Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>