

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)

Pediatric & Adult Medicine, Inc.  
13132 Newport Ave. #100  
Tustin, CA 92780  
714.565.7960 (tele)  
714.565.7982 (fax)  
[www.pam4kids.com](http://www.pam4kids.com)

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### **Why get vaccinated?**

Measles, mumps, and rubella are serious diseases.

Some family members may remember the day when "everyone" had measles and mumps. The complications of these illnesses are what we are seeking to prevent with vaccines.

#### **Measles**

- Measles virus causes rash, cough, runny nose, eye irritation and fever.
- It can lead to ear infections, PNEUMONIA, seizures (and jerking and staring), BRAIN DAMAGE, and death.

#### **Mumps**

- Mumps virus causes fever, headache, and swollen glands.
- It can lead to deafness, meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord covering), painful swelling of the testicles or ovaries, and, rarely, death.

#### **Rubella (German Measles)**

- Rubella virus causes rash, mild fever, and arthritis (mostly in women).
- If a woman gets rubella, while she is pregnant, she could have a miscarriage or her baby could be born with serious birth defects.

You or your child could catch these diseases by being around someone who has them. They spread from person to person through the air.

Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine can prevent these diseases.

Most children who get their MMR shots will not get these diseases. Many more children would get them if we stopped vaccinating, and we would see those dreaded complications.

### **Who should get MMR vaccine and when?**

Children should get two doses of MMR vaccine:

-the first at 12-15 months of age.

-and the second at 4-6 years of age.

Children can get the second dose at any age, as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose.

MMR vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Some adults should also get MMR vaccine:

Generally, anyone 18 years of age or older, who was born after 1956, should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine, unless they can show that they have had either the vaccines or the diseases.

Some people should not get MMR vaccine or should wait.

- People should not get MMR vaccine if they have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to gelatin, the antibiotic neomycin, or a previous dose of MMR vaccine.
- People who have fever or are severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled, should usually wait until they recover before getting MMR vaccine. Having a cold will not delay the vaccine.
- Pregnant women should wait to get MMR vaccine until they have given birth. Women should avoid getting pregnant for four weeks after getting MMR vaccine.
- Some people should check with their doctor about whether they should get MMR vaccine, including anyone who:
  - Has HIV/AIDS, or another disease that affects the immune system.
  - Is being treated with drugs that affect the immune system, such as steroids, for two weeks or longer.
  - Has any kind of cancer.
  - Is taking cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs.
  - Has ever had a low platelet count (a blood disorder)

### **What are the risks from MMR vaccine?**

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of MMR vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. Getting MMR vaccine is much safer than getting any of the three diseases.

#### *Mild problems.*

- Fever (up to 1 person out of 6).
- Mild rash (about 1 person out of 20).
- Swelling of glands in the cheeks or neck (rare) (usually within 7-14 days after the shot. They occur less often, after the second dose.

#### *Moderate problems*

- Seizure caused by fever (one out of 3,000 doses).
- Temporary pain and stiffness in the joints, mostly in teenage or adult women (up to one out of four)

#### *Severe problems (very rare).*

- Serious allergic reaction (less than one out of a million doses)

### **What if there is a moderate or severe reaction?**

What should I look for?

Any unusual conditions, such as a serious allergic reaction, high fever, or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness, within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot. A high fever or seizure, if it occurs, would happen one to two weeks after the shot.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccine was given.

- Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction By Filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

Or you can file this report through the VAERS web site at [www.vaers.org](http://www.vaers.org), or by calling 1-800-822-7967. VAERS does not provide medical advice.

How can I learn more?

Contact The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-cdc-info)