



Safety Notice **Measles**

No. 2019-02

Background

Measles is circulating in New Zealand, particularly in the Auckland Region where 812 of the 975 confirmed cases have been located as of 3 September 2019.

Measles is a highly infectious disease that is easily preventable through immunisation. The early symptoms of measles are:

- A fever
- A cough
- A runny nose
- Sore and watery 'pink' eyes
- Sometimes small white spots on the back inner cheek of your mouth.¹

In days 3 to 7 a rash may develop which tends to start on the face or behind the ears, before moving over the head and down the body. The rash lasts for up to a week.

People are contagious 5 days before to 5 days after rash onset, counting the day of rash onset as day 1.

While highly infectious, measles is easily preventable. Immunisations are readily available:

- Immunisation is not compulsory in New Zealand.
- If you were born in 1969 or later, you can get the measles vaccine for free.
- People born before 1969 are presumed to have immunity.

¹ Sourced From: Ministry of Health.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles/2019-measles-outbreak-information> Symptoms. Accessed on 4 September 2019.



Ministry of Health Advice

The official advice from the Ministry of Health is on events is:

*the Ministry does not recommend event organisers cancel events such as concerts, sports events, festivals, or other public congregations. However, organisers are asked to liaise closely with their local DHBs and public health units for the latest advice.*²

The official advice from the Ministry of Health on isolation is:

If you're feeling sick, you should stay away from work, school or public places, to help prevent putting other people at risk.

This also applies if you or a family member aren't fully immunised and may have been in contact with someone with measles.

*By isolating yourself you will help protect vulnerable people including babies, pregnant women, cancer patients and others who are unable to be immunised and for whom the impact of the disease can be devastating.*³

SCOUTS New Zealand's Position

In the interest of the health and safety of everyone involved, SCOUTS New Zealand has adopted the following stance:

- For members under the age of 50 who are in the Auckland Metropolitan area, and are not vaccinated we **strongly recommend** that members cease participating in scouting activities until they are immunised or the outbreak passes.
- In line with the Ministry of Health's current advice, SCOUTS New Zealand is **not** recommending any events across the organisation are cancelled.

² Sourced from: Ministry of Health.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles/2019-measles-outbreak-information> 2019 measles outbreak information.

Accessed on 4 September 2019.

³ Sourced From:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles> - Stopping the Spread. Accessed on 5 September 2019.



- Teams, including the Jamboree Leadership Team, have been aware of, and have been monitoring, the Ministry of Health's guidance since March 2019. The Jamboree Health and Hygiene Team collects immunisation information about all Jamboree participants and works closely with local and national health authorities to prevent infectious diseases (including measles) being brought to Jamboree with plans to minimise and manage any outbreak at the event.
- SCOUTS New Zealand actively encourages Groups to remind all leaders, parents and young people that if they are feeling unwell they must avoid attending all Scouting activities.

SCOUTS New Zealand is monitoring the Ministry of Health's advice and will continue to align the organisation's response with their guidance.

Members are reminded that if they are concerned they may be displaying the symptoms of measles, they should contact Healthline on 0800 611 116 or their Doctor to alert them of their symptoms prior to attending a SCOUT evening or event.

Collecting Immunisation Information

SCOUTS New Zealand **recommends** that groups, especially in the Auckland area, begin to request immunisation information on young people attending scouting on a regular and ongoing basis. Please keep in mind:

- As immunisation is not compulsory in New Zealand, Scouts cannot **force** members to disclose their immunisation status.
- We can **request** the information from parents and adult members in order to ensure a safe environment for all our members.
- This applies **equally** to youth and adult members alike.

Privacy Statement

As with any information collection process, the Privacy Act applies. Here is a statement you can use with parents:

- We are collecting immunisation information to further the Aims and Objects of SCOUTS New Zealand.
- The provision of immunisation information is voluntary.



- We may share immunisation information and contact details with the relevant District Health Boards, or Public Officials should we be required or asked.
- The information will be stored in Online Scout Manager (OSM).
- You can access and update this information through your OSM parent login at any time.

Working with Non-Immunised Members

NZ22 Jamboree registration data suggest that less than 3% of our youth members are not immunised.

Where adult leaders and young people are not immunised we recommend that a sensitive and respectful conversation be held with the parents and young person about the appropriate course of action. We recommend taking a risk based approach.

- For young people and adults in Auckland Group Leaders are encouraged to take risk based approach which could include:
 - For high risk areas and groups: Asking members who are not vaccinated to stop participating in scouting activities until such time as the epidemic has run its course may be the safest course of action.
 - For low risk areas and groups: it might simply be noting who is at greater risk from the epidemic to understand the risk to group.
- For other groups, it might simply be noting who is at greater risk from the epidemic.

Vaccinations are an emotive issue for some parents. We ask all leaders to carefully consider how to apply our scout values while weighing up the interests of individuals against the interests and safety of the wider scouting community.

Event Planning and Risk Management

All teams planning events (camps, tramps, or other events) should be identifying measles as a risk and implement steps to mitigate this risk. These teams are also advised to have a clear communication plan in place that will enable them to notify participants should someone be exposed to or contract measles during the



event. (This means making sure contact information is up to date in OSM or other registration systems for major events.)

External providers may seek additional information or cancel services, events in line with their own risk management procedures and decision making processes. SCOUTS New Zealand's policy is to respect the decision-making of external providers.

Exposure Notification protocol

Should a member contract or be exposed to measles they should first follow the guidance of their local Health Practitioner and District Health Board.

The affected member will be instructed on who they need to inform of the illness/exposure based on the period of time for which the member is deemed to have been contagious.

Should a member have been exposed to or contracts measles and has participated in a Scout Activity, the protocol is to:

- Not attend any further Scout Activities for the time period determined by their local health practitioner,
- Advise their local Group Leader or line manager / team leader who will, in turn, notify their respective General Manager,
- Identify any large Scout gathering outside of their Group that may be exposed (Camp, Gangshow, training, etc.); and
- Go to report.scouts.nz and under illness log the details of the person involved, confirming if they have been exposed to **or** have contracted measles.

Further Assistance

Should you have any additional concerns or require additional guidance please contact your local Group or Zone Leader, or General Manager.

For urgent 24/7 assistance please contact 0508 SCOUTHELP (0508 72622 4357)