

11 June 2019

Moving all 15 month vaccinations to 12 months - Auckland measles outbreak

- The 15 month MMR1 vaccination should now be given at 12 months in Auckland to protect young children in the current measles outbreak
- Please give all other scheduled 15 month vaccinations at the same time as the MMR1 – 4 vaccines in total
- If not administered simultaneously, MMR1 must be administered 4 weeks apart from other live vaccines eg varicella.
- ProPharma suggests weekly ordering to smooth distribution. Do not stockpile; there is no shortage.
- This change takes effect immediately and continues until further notice. It will be announced in the media tomorrow.
- Please actively recall all children between 1 and 5 years who have not received one MMR vaccination.

Bringing forward the 15 month vaccinations to 12 months

Due to the current measles outbreak, ARPHS and the Ministry of Health are recommending that the 15 month old MMR (MMR1) vaccination is moved forward to 12 months.

The preference is for all 4 vaccinations scheduled at 15 months to be administered at 12 months – MMR1, pneumococcal (PCV), Hib, and varicella VV (chickenpox) vaccines.

This simplifies the change as much as possible, and means a single immunisation event can continue to be claimed. It also reduces the risk of the child not returning for the other 15 month vaccinations.

If these 4 vaccinations are not given together, remember that the MMR1 must be administered 4 weeks apart from other live vaccines.

If two visits, give MMR1 and varicella VV first

If a parent or guardian prefers to separate these 4 vaccines into two visits then the practice will be unable to claim for the second visit. If a parent or guardian requests to split the vaccines, the preference is to administer MMR1 and varicella VV at the first visit, followed by PCV and Hib at the second visit.

If MMR1 and varicella VV are not administered simultaneously, then they should be given at least 4 weeks apart. It is preferable to administer the live vaccines (MMR and varicella) in separate limbs. See section 2.2.7 of the Immunisation Handbook.

Ordering and supply

To meet increased demand, there is a new process for ordering MMR vaccine for **Auckland practices only**. A shipment of MMR II brand vaccine (rather than the usual Priorix vaccine) has been allocated for delivery to practices in the region.

Auckland general practices should order MMR II instead of Priorix until further notice. To order this, please select MMR II (MSD). This vaccine can be used in accordance with the immunisation schedule. Infants who previously received Priorix vaccine at aged 15 months can complete their 4 year immunisation with MMR II vaccine and vice versa.

Orders for MMR II can be made weekly in Auckland during the outbreak. Other schedule vaccines should be ordered fortnightly as usual.

Note that ProPharma does not keep backorders for any of the funded vaccines. This means that if your order is unable to be filled for any reason (including if stock is temporarily unavailable), you will need to place that order again.

Recall children between 1 and 5 years for MMR1

Measles has now disrupted learning for children at early learning services and schools in Auckland.

Please actively recall all children between 1 and 5 years who have not received at least one MMR vaccination.

Do not turn away anyone seeking MMR1

Do not turn away anyone seeking MMR1 if under 50 years (and over the age of 12 months). The vaccine is free for people under 50 years who have not received 2 MMR vaccinations.

Additionally, you may choose to take the opportunity to check vaccination status and offer MMR 1 to anyone in your practice when they seek care for other reasons.

MMR can be offered to children from 6 months if they are travelling overseas to countries where there are currently measles outbreaks such as the US, Japan and the Philippines. [See the Ministry of Health website for more information](#). MMR administered to infants aged 6 – 12 months is categorised as MMRO. They will still require MMR1 and MMR2.

If in doubt about vaccination history, immunise rather than check serology

Many school and ECEC staff members will be seeking evidence of immunity so they can avoid quarantine if exposed to a measles case. Please vaccinate those without documented evidence of immunity against measles, provided there are no contraindications. This is preferred to requesting serological confirmation.

Please record any new MMR vaccinations on the NIR, even if these are for adults.