



Take Action – Protect Against Measles Now!!

The Ministry of Health wishes to inform the public that, according to the *Epidemic and Emerging Disease Alerts in the Pacific* report dated 4th November 2025, Australia has recorded 145 measles cases so far in 2025 (the highest number since 2019), New Zealand, 17 confirmed cases and China more than 1503.

People are expected to travel between countries during the festive season, the risk of measles entering Vanuatu is very high, and with low vaccination coverage in many parts of the country, the consequences of having a case of Measles and then outbreak can be devastating especially for young children.

What is Measles

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by the measles virus. It typically begins with:

- High fever, rash over the body and may have cough, red eyes or runny nose

In malnourished children and unvaccinated children, measles can become severe and lead to life-threatening complications such as pneumonia or brain inflammation.

How Measles Spreads

Measles is airborne and spreads easily through sneezing, coughing and contact with respiratory secretions

Vaccination: The Most Powerful Tool We Have

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases in the world. But it is also one of the most preventable—if we vaccinate.

The Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is a safe, proven, and effective way to protect children from measles. It has been part of Vanuatu's national immunization program for many years and is freely available at health facilities across the country.

In Vanuatu, the MMR vaccine is given in two doses:

- The first dose at 12 months of age
- The second dose at 18 months of age

Both doses are essential. A single dose offers some protection, but full immunity requires both. Without them, children remain vulnerable to infection—especially during times of increased travel and exposure.

The Ministry of Health has ensured availability of Vaccines at health facilities and continuous surveillance. However, the most important action must come from families themselves.

Parents and caregivers are urged to check their children's vaccination records. If your child has missed any dose, now is the time to act. Visit your nearest health facility and ensure your child is fully protected.

Vaccination is not just a personal choice—it is a community responsibility. When we vaccinate our children, we protect not only them, but also those around them—especially babies, the elderly, and those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

As we prepare to celebrate with our loved ones, let's also protect them. Let's make sure our children are safe from preventable diseases like measles. Let's take action before it's too late.

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