

I'm an adult. Should I get the measles mumps and rubella vaccine known as MMR?

The answer is a bit complex but hang in there, we will figure it out together. Whether or not you need to get vaccinated depends on your health history and also your vaccination history. So, let's break it down.

You do not need to get an MMR vaccine if you fall into one of these categories:

- **Number 1: You already had measles and have a lab test showing it.**

If you've had a measles infection you've got immunity. You got it the hard way, but you are not going to catch measles again.

- **Number 2: You were born before 1957.**

Why 1957? Because vaccines weren't available then and measles was so common that we assume everyone had measles or was exposed to it and developed immunity.

- **Number 3: You have a vaccination record that shows you've had at least one dose of MMR vaccine.**

Now in some cases, people need two doses and we'll get to that in just a minute.

- **Number 4: You've had a blood test called a titer that shows you have immunity.**

So, do any of those apply to you? If so, congratulations, you are considered immune to measles.

But what about the rest of us? Most adults need just one dose of MMR vaccine in their lifetime to be considered immune, but some adults need 2 doses.

Healthcare workers, students in post high school educational programs like colleges and trade schools and international travelers including people who are going abroad just for one trip need a second dose of MMR vaccine because they're more likely to be exposed to measles.

People with HIV and people living with someone who's immunocompromised also should get a second dose because there's a higher risk of serious illness.

And a small number of people who were vaccinated before 1968 should get a second dose. That's because one type of measles vaccine available in the 60s wasn't as effective. So, if you fall into that category, we recommend talking to your doctor. You may need another shot.

What if you don't know your vaccination history? You could do a blood test called a "titer" to see if you have immunity to measles but this is often expensive. It tends to be easier to just get vaccinated. It is perfectly safe to get a dose or two of MMR vaccine even if you got them in the past.

If you're not sure where to get vaccinated, our website can help.

Visit kingcounty.gov/findaclinic