

Frequently Asked Questions

Measles-Rubella Vaccination Campaign India, 2017

What are measles and rubella diseases?

- Measles and Rubella are highly contagious viral diseases that are spread by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing.
- Infection with Measles is followed by high fever, rash that spreads over the body, cough, running nose and red watery eyes.
- Measles weakens the immune system of the body. Hence infection with Measles often leads to serious complications that include blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea and severe respiratory infections such as pneumonia.
- Most measles-related deaths are caused by complications associated with the disease.
- One-third of all measles-related deaths worldwide occur in India.
- Rubella is a mild viral infection that occurs most often in children and young adults.
- Infection with Rubella is followed by rash and low fever. It may be associated with swelling of lymph node and joint pain.
- Rubella infection during pregnancy can cause abortion, stillbirth and may lead to multiple birth defects in the new born; like blindness, deafness, heart defects; known as Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS).
- India accounts for around one third of all children born worldwide with congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).

What is congenital rubella syndrome (CRS)?

Rubella infection in pregnant women may have serious consequences causing miscarriages, stillbirths or severe birth defects known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). Children with CRS can suffer hearing impairments, cataracts, heart defects, developmental delay and many other lifelong disabilities.

How can I protect my child from measles and rubella?

- Measles-rubella (MR) vaccine is given for preventing both measles and rubella diseases in the child.
- No specific treatment is available for measles and rubella but these diseases can easily be prevented by vaccination.

When should I give my child Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine?

- MR vaccine is given at 9-12 months and 16-24 months of age of child.
- The Government is providing Measles-Rubella vaccine free of cost through its immunization programme.

Why is a Measles Rubella vaccination campaign being conducted?

- The purpose of the Measles-Rubella campaign is to protect your child and eliminate transmission of Measles and Rubella from the community by vaccinating 100% target children with MR vaccine.
- Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign is a special campaign to vaccinate all children of 9 months to <15 years of age group with one additional dose of MR vaccine.
- This additional campaign dose will boost the immunity of child and protect the entire community by eliminating transmission of measles and rubella.
- The conduct of Measles-Rubella vaccination campaigns was an important factor in achieving measles elimination in the Western Hemisphere (2002), and the elimination of indigenous rubella in 2009.

Is Measles-Rubella vaccine safe for my child, specially the one being used in Measles-Rubella campaign?

- The Measles-Rubella vaccine is safe. Around 150 countries are currently using measles and rubella containing vaccines and they have proven to be highly safe and effective.
- Most children who get the Measles-Rubella vaccine do not have any serious problems with it. Side effects, if any, like low fever and mild rash following administration of MR vaccine are mostly mild and transient.
- The vaccine being given in the Measles-Rubella campaign is produced in India and is WHO prequalified. The same vaccine is being given in the routine immunisation programme of India and in many countries, including neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar.

- Private practitioners in India have been giving Measles-Rubella or measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine to the children for many years. The Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) endorses the strategy of Measles-Rubella vaccination.

Where and when can my child be vaccinated during the campaign?

- All eligible children will be vaccinated at the following session sites:
 - Schools : *First 1-2 weeks of campaign*
 - Health sub-centres, anganwadi centres, fixed outreach sessions and mobile/special posts in villages and urban areas: *Next 1-2 weeks of campaign*
 - *Government health facilities will vaccinate on all days of campaign*
 - States would conduct these MR vaccination campaigns in a phased manner.

Does my child need a Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign dose even if she/he has had two doses of Measles containing vaccine through her/his routine vaccinations?

- Yes, your child needs the additional dose being administered during the Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign.
- The Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign dose is given to all targeted children, irrespective of prior measles-rubella immunization status or disease status.
- The campaign dose will be administered to all children falling between the age group of 9 months to <15 years of age, **irrespective of any past history of disease or vaccination.**
- Both boys and girls will be vaccinated irrespective of any caste or community bias.
- Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign dose is in addition to routine immunization dose.

My child has already been vaccinated for measles and rubella as per immunization schedule given by paediatrician/health centre. Should my child take the Measles-Rubella vaccine during the ongoing campaign?

- All children in the age group of nine months to 15 years must take the Measles and Rubella vaccine being given in the ongoing campaign. Even those children, who have been vaccinated for measles by their paediatrician or at health centre, should take the Measles-Rubella campaign vaccine.
- Measles is a major childhood killer disease and rubella leads to lifelong birth defects. Both diseases have no cure, but can be prevented by taking the Measles-Rubella vaccine. It is important for children to take the vaccine both in routine immunisation and in campaign to boost their immunity.

- Every year in India nearly 2.7 million children get measles. Those who survive, suffer from serious complications including diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition. Rubella transmission is also highly prevalent across India. It may lead to spontaneous abortion, stillbirth and irreversible birth defects such as lifelong disabilities affecting multiple organs like deafness, blindness, mental retardation, heart defect etc.
- Every year over 40 000 children are born in India with such birth defects (Congenital Rubella Syndrome).

If my child received one dose of Measles-Rubella vaccine during the Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign, should he/she receive the routine dose of Measles and Rubella vaccines?

- Yes, the child should receive both routine doses of Measles and Rubella vaccines at 9-12 months and 16-24 months of age, irrespective of any Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign dose in the past.

If rubella vaccine is aimed at preventing birth defects, why are boys being vaccinated?

Both girls and boys are at an equal risk of getting infected as well as transmitting the rubella virus, if not already protected against the disease. Therefore, both boys and girls need to take Measles-Rubella vaccine in routine immunization as well as during Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign

My child has mild fever, should he/she receive MR vaccine during campaign?

- All children who have completed 9 months of age and are below 15 years of age should be administered and additional MR dose during campaign
- Malnourished children should be vaccinated on a priority basis, as they are more likely to have complications like diarrhoea and pneumonia
- Children with minor illnesses such as mild respiratory infection, diarrhoea, and low grade fever can be vaccinated

Who should NOT be vaccinated?

Do not vaccinate if the child has:

- High fever or other serious disease (eg: unconscious, convulsions, etc).
- Hospitalized children
- History of a severe allergic reaction to measles/rubella vaccine in the past
- Known immune-compromised, child on steroid therapy or on immunosuppressant drugs

Can vaccination by additional dose of MR cause any side effects to my child? School authorities are saying they are not responsible if anything happens to the child after taking MR vaccine during vaccination campaign in schools.

- The MR vaccine being used in the campaign is completely safe.
- Like with any other injectable vaccine, there could be a transient mild pain and redness at the injection site, low-grade fever, rash and muscle aches. The vaccine is not known to cause any other adverse event. However, all immunization sessions – whether in schools or outreach – are linked to fully equipped health centres to handle any adverse event
- All health facilities are well equipped and have fully trained health staff to manage any side effect.

Is the Vaccine, given to my child during the campaign, of good quality?

- Yes. The Measles-Rubella vaccine is a WHO pre-qualified vaccine, safe and effective.
- There is Vaccine Vial Monitor (VVM) on top of each vial which indicates the quality of the vaccine given.

Is it true that Measles-Rubella vaccine is banned in western countries?

No. The measles and rubella vaccines are in use globally and for several decades. The American Region has eliminated measles and rubella by vaccinating children with measles and rubella vaccines.

How is the MR vaccine administered during the campaign and routine immunization sessions?

- The MR vaccine is diluted with the accompanying diluent and is administered by sub cutaneous injection on the arm of the child.
- A new auto disable syringe with needle is used for each child. The syringe and needle are destroyed after single use and a new one used for the next child.