



## Important Facts for Parents to Know about **The MMR Vaccine**

**The MMR vaccine prevents three serious diseases — measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) — which can cause permanent disability or death.**

- Measles is best known as an illness with rash and high fever, but can also lead to pneumonia or a brain infection called encephalitis, and can cause death. Approximately 5% of children (500 out of 10,000) with measles will develop pneumonia, and more than 3 out of 10,000 will die.
- *Mumps* is a disease caused by the mumps virus. It usually infects children younger than 10 years old and begins with swelling of the salivary glands. The swelling usually lasts for about a week. Mumps can cause deafness, an infection of the lining of the brain, and death.
- *Rubella* is usually not a serious disease for children but it almost always causes birth defects when a pregnant woman is infected. Up to 85% of babies whose mothers are infected during pregnancy will have blindness, deafness, heart defects, or mental retardation.

**The vaccine effectively protects against all three diseases in at least 95% of children who receive the full series of shots.**

**Nearly all children who get the MMR vaccine (more than 80%) will have *no side effects at all*. Of those children who have a side effect, most will have only a mild reaction.**

- Mild side effects of the vaccine include soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given, mild rash, mild to moderate fever, swelling of the lymph glands, and temporary pain, stiffness or swelling in joints.
- In rare cases (about 3 children out of 10,000 shots given, or .03% of cases) children have a moderate reaction. This reaction is a seizure related to having a high fever.

**In very rare cases (far less than 1 child out of 10,000 shots given, or about 0.001%) children have a serious reaction.**

- The vaccine may cause low blood platelets that can lead to a temporary bleeding problem, or seizures related to high fever, lowered consciousness, or coma.

**If you notice any moderate or serious reactions like those described here, call your doctor right away.**

- Aspirin-free pain reliever can be used to reduce fever and soreness.

**Your child's chance of being harmed by these diseases is far greater than any chance of being harmed by the vaccine.**

- Immunizations are one of the most important ways parents can protect their children against serious infectious diseases.

parents:

**Please also read the Vaccine Information Statement on the MMR vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for other important information, including who should and who should not get the vaccine.**