

Measles-Rubella (MR) Vaccination Campaign

Some Common Concerns of Parents

1- My child has already been vaccinated for measles and rubella as per immunization schedule given by the paediatrician / health centre. Why should my child take the vaccine during MR campaign again?

Ans. 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 from 6th to 28th Feb 2017 in these five states/UTs (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Goa and Lakshadweep). Even those children, who have been vaccinated for measles by their paediatrician or at health centres, should take the MR vaccine during the campaign. The vaccine is safe. It has been seen that vaccinated children were also getting the disease, therefore, the additional dose during the campaign implies additional protection to the children. 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 MR vaccine. It is important for children to take the vaccine both in routine immunisation and in campaigns.

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 with such birth defects caused by Congenital Rubella Syndrome.

2- How safe is the MR vaccine, specially the one being used in MR campaign?

Ans. MR Vaccine is a safe and an effective vaccine, in use for over 40 years and in many countries across the world.

The vaccine being given in the MR campaign is produced in India and is WHO prequalified. The same vaccine is being given in routine immunisation programme of India and in many neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar.

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

3- Is it true that MR vaccine is banned in western countries?

Ans. No, it is not true. 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 vaccine.

4- Are there any side effects of the MR vaccine? School authorities are saying they are not responsible if anything happens to the child after taking MR vaccine during vaccination campaign in schools.

Ans. The MR vaccine which is being used in the campaign is **completely safe**. Like with any other injectable vaccine, there could be mild pain and redness at the injection site, low-grade fever, rash and muscle aches, which subsides on its own. 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.