Immunization Questions from Adults Regarding Measles

For adults who are international travelers, college or trade school students or health care workers, there are specific immunization recommendations for two doses of MMR vaccine. We also advise 2 doses of MMR vaccine if you work with babies, children, pregnant women, or people with weak immune systems.

If you do not fall into the above categories and are wondering about your own vaccine history, what should you do? How do you know if you should seek another dose of MMR vaccine? We realize that it is unlikely that you have saved your vaccine record from childhood, so here are some general guidelines about whether you are likely to be protected from measles.

Before there was a vaccine, there were millions of cases of measles every year in the U.S. and about 500 deaths.

### Timeline

- **1963** - Two types of measles vaccine were released: a live virus vaccine and a killed virus vaccine.
- **1967** - The killed virus vaccine was shown to be less effective and was removed from the market.
- **1971** - The first combined MMR vaccine (measles, mumps and rubella) was introduced; this is similar to what we have today.
- **1989** - The US adopted the current two-dose recommended schedule.

### Immunization Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born Category</th>
<th>Vaccine History</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born before 1957</td>
<td>You are considered immune</td>
<td>No further action is necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born between 1957 - 1967</td>
<td>You likely received 1 dose of vaccine that could have been less effective</td>
<td>at least 1 more dose is recommended for protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born between 1967 - 1988</td>
<td>You likely received at least 1 dose of highly effective vaccine</td>
<td>another dose is an option if you want to be sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in or after 1989</td>
<td>You likely received 2 doses of highly effective vaccine</td>
<td>No further action is necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Health Departments do not keep hard copies of immunization records, but here’s what is known:

- Measles vaccine is highly effective, and most adults who received the live virus vaccine are indeed protected.
- There is no harm in getting another dose of MMR vaccine even if you may already be immune to measles. Call your doctor to discuss.
- There is a blood test, called the measles antibody IgG test, to help assess whether or not you may have immunity to measles.
- Deciding whether you should be tested or vaccinated is a question to discuss with your doctor. She or he can discuss your history and your current risk of exposure. The guidelines above can help determine if you are likely to have had one or two doses in your past.

Contact your health care provider to discuss, or visit a clinic. If you are un/under-insured, here are some options [http://www.acphd.org/clinics.aspx](http://www.acphd.org/clinics.aspx)