



## MMR Vaccine Update

March 2025

To Our Families,

The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is administered twice in early childhood. The first dose confers immunity in 93% of children, and the second dose raises its efficacy to 97%. The initial MMR dose is generally given on or after the first birthday. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends giving the second MMR between ages four and six, but it can be given earlier at the doctor's discretion.

Infants do not need the measles vaccine before six months because they are protected against the virus from antibodies that are passed from the mother's body to them through the placenta. This immunity wanes after six months, increasing the possibility that a baby could contract measles if exposed to the virus between six and twelve months.

This brief period with limited protection has not been a problem in the past. However, given the current measles outbreak in Texas and New Mexico and the reduction in vaccine rates across the county, many parents have asked us to vaccinate their children prior to the first birthday.

Administering the MMR before the first birthday will provide additional immunity to the virus, but a child does not develop the same immune response as they would when the first dose is given on or after the first birthday. For this reason, any child who receives an "early" dose of the vaccine, i.e., before 12 months, will still need to receive the two regularly scheduled vaccines described above.

As of this writing, the Maryland Health Department does not recommend a third, "early" dose of the MMR vaccine unless a child is travelling internationally. However, it is unclear whether this policy takes the current measles outbreak into account. Therefore, we will administer an MMR to any susceptible child if requested by his or her parents.

Please call the office if you have questions about giving your child an "early" MMR immunization or would like to schedule an appointment to get the vaccine.

Drs. Bennett, Ahlstrom, Rosloff and Suarez