

Neonatal Intensive Care Units Parent Information about Measles and Visiting Guidelines

At New York-Presbyterian, our top priority is the health, safety and well-being of our patients and their families. There are ongoing outbreaks of measles in New York and other states as well as several other countries. Measles is highly contagious and spreads through the air.

If exposed to measles, infants in the Neonatal ICU (NICU) can get severe measles and suffer serious complications including pneumonia, diarrhea, or brain swelling, which can lead to brain damage or death.

To help protect babies in the NICU from measles, we now have a special visiting policy in place. We have based our guidelines on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and New York State Department of Health.

In developing these guidelines, we considered each infant's need for emotional support from their families and the safety of all infants in the NICU. Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation with these guidelines.

Visiting Guidelines

- No one with fever and rash, cough, runny nose, or red eyes is permitted to enter the NICU.
- **Up to three (3) adults, including parents, with proven immunity to measles are the only people who can visit your baby.** These people will be selected by each family.
- *Immunity means that a person is protected from measles.*
- Only **two (2) people at a time** can be at your baby's bedside.
- Proven immunity to measles is based on **one** of the following:
 - **written documentation of two (2) measles vaccines or**
 - **written documentation of a blood test that shows measles immunity**
 - **proof of birth before 1957 (e.g., birth certificate, driver's license, ID card, passport)**
- The NICU care team will review the written documentation.
- After confirming their immunity to measles, the selected people can visit the NICU without restrictions.
- If a selected person does not have proven immunity to measles, they can either
 - get the measles vaccine **or**
 - get the blood test to check their immunity to measles
- If the blood test shows immunity to measles, the person can visit the NICU without restrictions.

- If the blood test does not show immunity to measles, the person should get the measles vaccine as soon as possible and afterwards can visit the NICU without restrictions. They should get their 2nd measles vaccine in 4 weeks.

The following questions and answers explain more about measles and why the Hospital has put this guideline in place.

What is measles and who can get measles?

Measles is a very infectious virus. It spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Anyone who has not received the measles vaccine or never had measles can get measles. Babies are too young to get the measles vaccine.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles begins with fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes. After a few days, a rash starts on the face and spreads over the body.

What are complications of measles?

Serious measles complications can include pneumonia, diarrhea and dehydration, and encephalitis (brain swelling). Patients with encephalitis can develop brain damage or die.

How can I protect my baby from getting measles?

You can protect your baby if you are immune to measles. Breastfeeding will also help protect your baby. Make sure that all your family members have had their measles vaccines.

What about the measles vaccine?

The measles vaccine is very safe and very effective. Ask your doctor if you have more questions about the measles vaccine. You can also learn about the measles vaccine on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website.