

Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) Immunity Test

Measles, mumps and rubella are contagious viral infections that can be controlled through a single vaccination. This panel of tests will determine immunity or infection of one or more of these viruses, or if you have not been exposed and are susceptible to a virus.

Measles

Measles, also called rubeola, is an extremely contagious viral infection that is transmitted through respiratory secretions. A measles immunity test involves the detecting of antibodies in the blood that develop in response to the infection or through vaccination.

The measles virus infects cells in the lungs and at the back of the throat and, after a 1 to 2 week incubation, causes symptoms such as a high fever, dry cough, red eyes, light sensitivity, runny nose, sore throat, tiny white spots inside the mouth, and a characteristic rash that typically starts on the face and spreads down the body to the trunk and legs. Most people recover within two weeks, but up to 20% develop complications that may include ear infection, bronchitis, pneumonia, diarrhea, or more rarely encephalitis or blindness.

Mumps

Mumps is a viral infection that is transmitted through respiratory secretions or saliva. A mumps immunity test involves the detecting of antibodies in the blood that develop in response to the infection or through vaccination.

After a 2 to 3 week incubation period, an infected person typically develops flu-like symptoms such as a headache, muscle aches, and fever that are followed by characteristic parotitis – swelling of the salivary (parotid) glands below one or both ears. For most people, mumps is a mild, self-limited illness, but some may develop complications such as temporary or permanent deafness, inflammation of the testicles (orchitis) or ovaries (oophoritis), pancreatitis, meningitis, or encephalitis.

Rubella

Rubella is a highly contagious virus that causes an infection that is usually mild and characterized by fever and rash that last about 2 to 3 days. A rubella immunity test involves the detecting of antibodies in the blood that develop in response to the infection or through vaccination.

The rubella virus generally causes a mild infection marked by a fine red rash that appears on the face and neck and then travels to the trunk and limbs before disappearing a few days later. The virus is spread by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing. The infection can cause symptoms such as fever, enlarged lymph nodes, runny nose, red eyes, and joint pain.

See other side for more information on the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) immunity test.

Why do I need to be tested?

Testing for measles, mumps and rubella may be used to confirm immunity to the virus due to previous infection or vaccination.

What is antibody testing?

When you are exposed to measles, mumps or rubella, either through exposure or vaccination, your immune system responds by producing antibodies to the virus. Two classes of measles, mumps and rubella antibodies may be found in the blood: IgM and IgG.

IgM antibodies are the first to be produced by the body in response to a measles, mumps or rubella infection. Levels of IgM antibodies increase for several days to a maximum level and then begin to taper off over the next few weeks. IgG antibodies take longer to appear, but stay in the bloodstream for life to provide long-term protection. This test looks for the presence of IgG antibodies to determine if you have been previously infected or have been immunized; it does not detect the presence of IgM antibodies that appear in an active infection.

What should I do if my results are positive or negative?

It is always recommended you meet with a healthcare provider to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your healthcare provider will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

If your results were positive: If measles, mumps or rubella IgG antibodies are present, then it is likely that you have been exposed to measles, mumps or rubella either through infection or immunization. You should share your results with your healthcare provider to discuss treatment options and/or further testing.

If your results were negative: If the antibodies for measles, mumps or rubella are not found, you have likely not been exposed to the viruses or received a vaccination. You should talk to your healthcare provider to let him know you have not been vaccinated and discuss your options.

What other resources are available to learn more about my health and laboratory tests?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov
- Lab Tests Online: labtestsonline.org
- WebMD: webmd.com

DLO Direct offers direct access to laboratory testing for informational purposes. A DLO Direct lab test result is not a medical diagnosis and is not intended as medical advice. Only a healthcare provider can interpret lab results and diagnose a medical condition or disease.

Because tests have not been ordered by a healthcare provider, third party entities, including Medicare and Medicaid, will not reimburse for these tests.



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