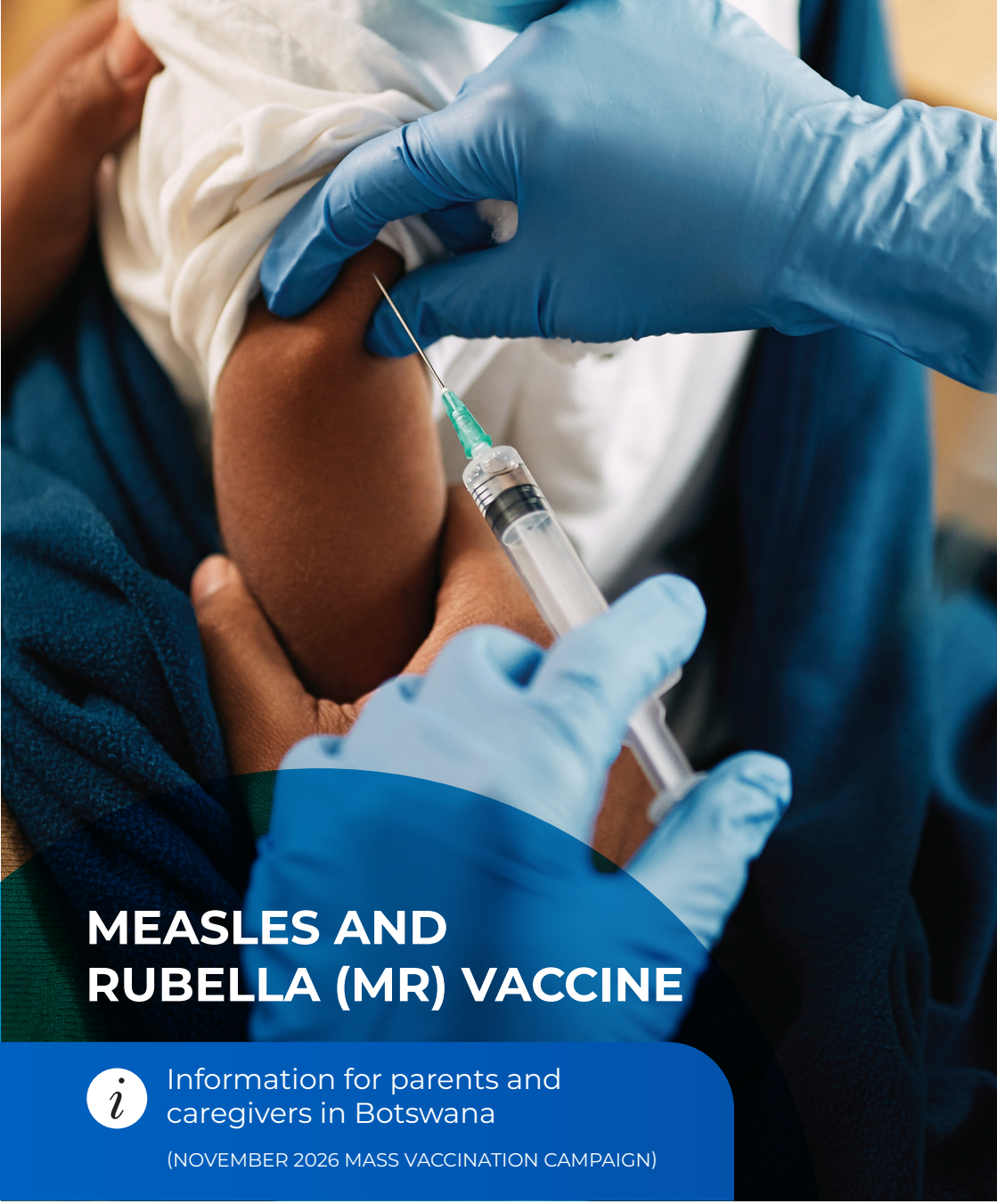


MEASLES AND RUBELLA (MR) VACCINE

Information for parents and caregivers in Botswana

(NOVEMBER 2026 MASS VACCINATION CAMPAIGN)

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What are Measles and Rubella?

Measles and rubella are highly contagious diseases caused by viruses. They spread from person to person through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms may include fever, cough, runny nose, red or watery eyes, rash and swollen glands. Complications can include ear infections, diarrhoea, pneumonia and inflammation of the brain. Measles can cause severe illness, hospitalisation and, in some cases, death.

What is the MR Vaccine?

- The measles and rubella (MR) vaccine protects against both measles and rubella.
- It contains weakened forms of the measles and rubella viruses.
- It helps the body develop protection against both diseases.
- It does not contain the mumps vaccine.
- *The vaccine is given as a 0.5 mL injection under the skin, usually in the thigh in young children or the upper arm in older children.*

Why Is Vaccination Important?

Vaccination helps:

- Protect children against measles and rubella.
- Prevent serious complications from measles.
- Prevent the spread of measles and rubella in the community.
- Protect the whole community.

Who Should Receive the Vaccine?

- Children aged 9–59 months, regardless of previous vaccination status, during the Botswana Measles-Rubella Mass Vaccination Campaign in November 2026.
- The campaign vaccine protects children against measles and rubella.
- A health care worker will advise you if there is any reason your child should not receive the vaccine at the time of vaccination.

Who Should Not Receive the Vaccine?

- Your child should not receive the MR vaccine if they:
  - Have had a severe allergic reaction after a previous measles or MR vaccine, or to any component of the vaccine
  - Have a severely weakened immune system due to a congenital condition, advanced HIV infection, leukaemia, lymphoma, malignant disease or high-dose immunosuppressive treatment

What Should I Tell the Health Care Worker Before Vaccination?

Tell the health care worker if your child:

- Is taking any medicines.
- Has recently received blood, plasma, immunoglobulins or a blood transfusion.
- Is seriously unwell or has a high fever.

A mild cold, mild fever, mild respiratory infection or diarrhoea does not usually prevent vaccination. Ask a health care worker if you are unsure whether your child should receive the vaccine.

Is the Vaccine Safe?

- MR vaccines are generally safe and well tolerated.
- Most reactions after vaccination are mild and go away on their own. Serious reactions are rare.

MR Vaccine Side Effects

- Some children may experience reactions after vaccination, including:
  - Pain or tenderness, redness or swelling where the injection was given
  - Mild fever
  - Mild rash
  - Irritability
  - Swollen glands, muscle pain or tingling sensations may also occur
  - Joint symptoms are uncommon in children
- Most reactions are mild and temporary.
- Serious reactions, such as a severe allergic reaction, are rare.

What Should I Do If My Child Feels Unwell?

If your child has severe symptoms or you are concerned:

- Take them to the nearest health facility.
- Inform the health care worker that your child recently received the MR vaccine.
- Seek urgent medical care if there is difficulty breathing, swelling of the face or throat, widespread hives or rash, or collapse.

Why Reporting Suspected Reactions Matters

- Reporting helps health authorities monitor vaccine safety.
- It helps identify and respond to possible problems quickly.
- Your report can help protect other children and members of the community.

If your child experiences any reaction following vaccination, seek medical attention first and report the suspected reaction to any healthcare worker.

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