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## Is measles vaccination a risk factor for inflammatory bowel disease?

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### Abstract

Measles virus may persist in intestinal tissue, particularly that affected by Crohn's disease, and early exposure to measles may be a risk factor for the development of Crohn's disease. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis occur in the same families and may share a common aetiology. In view of the rising incidence of inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis), we examined the impact of measles vaccination upon these conditions. Prevalences of Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, coeliac disease, and peptic ulceration were determined in 3545 people who had received live measles vaccine in 1964 as part of a measles vaccine trial. A longitudinal birth cohort of 11407 subjects was one unvaccinated comparison cohort, and 2541 partners of those vaccinated was another. Compared with the birth cohort, the relative risk of developing Crohn's disease in the vaccinated group was 3.01 (95% CI 1.45-6.23) and of developing ulcerative colitis was 2.53 (1.15-5.58). There was no significant difference between these two groups in coeliac disease prevalence. Increased prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease,

coeliac disease or peptic ulceration, was found in the vaccinated cohort compared with their partners. These findings suggest that measles virus may play a part in the development not only of Crohn's disease but also of ulcerative colitis.



# Article Info

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