



UK Health
Security
Agency

Date: 25/1/2024

To: Parents / Guardians

Measles – information for parents and guardians

There have been cases of measles affecting young children who have not had their measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Measles can spread very quickly and easily, in communities such as schools and nurseries where people have not had two doses of the MMR vaccine. Measles can cause serious illness needing hospitalisation – and in rare cases it can cause death.

People in certain at-risk groups, including babies and small children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are at increased risk of complications if they catch measles. Anyone who has missed their MMR vaccination can get measles.

Vaccination with **TWO doses of MMR** is the only way to give people maximum protection:

- 1st dose should be given just after the child's first birthday
- 2nd dose at 3 years 4 months and certainly before children start school full time
- However, **you can have the MMR vaccine at any age**. It is safe, effective and free of charge

If anyone in your family is not up to date with their MMR, **contact your GP surgery to arrange vaccination as soon as possible**.

To reduce the risk of measles spreading we ask that children and adults do not attend nurseries and schools for 21 days, if they have been in contact with someone with measles and have not had **at least one dose of MMR** – because **it can take up to 21 days for measles to develop** after contact with an infected person.

About the MMR vaccine

- The MMR vaccine is part of the NHS routine childhood vaccine schedule. It is very effective against measles, and it also protects against mumps and rubella.
- For people who do not touch any pork products, **there is a version of the MMR vaccine, Priorix, which has no pork ingredients**. You can request Priorix from your GP.
- If you are not sure whether you have had any doses of the MMR vaccine already, it is perfectly safe to have another dose. **You can get both doses 4 weeks apart**.

What to do if anyone in your family is not up to date with their MMR vaccinations

- Make an appointment with your GP to get up to date with their MMR vaccines.
- This is especially important when measles is spreading in the community as any child or adult who has not had **at least one dose of MMR** and comes into contact with someone with measles may **have to be excluded from (not able to attend) nursery/ school/ college etc for up to 21 days**.
- If you are not sure if your child/ any family member needs an MMR vaccine, check their Red Book or you can contact your GP surgery to check.
- Make sure family members are up to date with their MMR vaccines before, mixing/ travelling for festive celebrations, going to festivals, abroad on holiday, and starting college or university.

Measles is not just a problem for young children

People in certain at-risk groups, including babies and small children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are at increased risk of complications if they catch measles. Anyone who has missed their MMR vaccination can get measles.

Symptoms of measles appear 7-10 days after contact with the virus and include

- cold-like symptoms such as runny or blocked nose, sneezing and cough
- red, sore, watery eyes
- high temperature (fever), which may reach around 40°C / 104°F
- a non-itchy, red-brown rash usually appears 3-5 days later (sometimes starts around the ears before spreading to the body), spots may be raised and join to form blotchy patches – which may be harder to see on darker skin tones
- small white spots may appear inside cheeks and the back of lips (for a few days)

What to do if you think your child has measles

- contact NHS111 or phone your GP surgery. If you do need to visit a GP or hospital, **you must call ahead** to let them know that it could be measles. The staff will make special arrangements to see you and/or your child so that, if they have measles, they won't pass it to other people.

- If you or your child has measles, you should stay off nursery/ school/ university/ work/ other group activities **until at least 4 days after the rash appears**, because you will still be infectious which means you can spread measles to others.
- avoid contact with infants, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity

More information on measles and MMR

- NHS measles information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>
- NHS MMR information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>
- UKHSA leaflet on measles (also available in a range of languages): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools>

Meanwhile, in order for us to prepare for the eventuality of a confirmed case of measles in our school please can you let us know immediately if your child has not been fully vaccinated (i.e., no vaccination or only 1 vaccination).

The risk to an unvaccinated pupil is high and we will need this information in order to make decisions quickly about managing cases.

Thank you for your co-operation with this matter. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us immediately.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs L Jukes
(Headteacher)