

## Rise in measles cases – check your children are vaccinated

There has been an increase in measles cases across the country and parents/carers are being encouraged to be aware of the symptoms of measles and to make sure their children have had two doses of the MMR vaccine.

### **What is measles and what are the symptoms?**

Measles is a very contagious (easy to catch) infection which can lead to illness such as ear infections, vomiting, diarrhoea and pneumonia. On rare occasions the infection can cause serious complications such as blindness, pneumonia and meningitis. Young babies and individuals whose immunity is compromised are at increased risk of severe disease. For pregnant women there are extra risks as measles can cause harm to the baby, leading to increased risk of miscarriage, preterm birth and stillbirth. The MMR vaccine is not given during pregnancy.

Measles is one of the world's most highly infectious diseases. One person infected by measles can infect nine out of ten of their unvaccinated close contacts (World Health Organisation, 2032). Measles is spread through coughing or sneezing and can remain in the air or on a surface for up to two hours. Spending as little as 15 minutes in contact with someone infected with measles is enough to catch the infection.

Measles symptoms:

- high fever or temperature
- sore, red, watery eyes
- coughing
- aching and feeling generally unwell
- a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

### **Call ahead before attending a medical appointment**

If your child has symptoms of measles do not take them to school or nursery. To get medical advice please stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111. Please do not visit the GP surgery or A&E without calling ahead. This is because measles spread very quickly, and it is important to try and prevent it spreading to others who may be in a GP or hospital waiting room. Calling ahead will allow medical staff to prepare.

Any person who has symptoms should try to stay away from areas where they could meet vulnerable people such as traveling on public transport or visiting care homes.

### **MMR vaccine**

The free MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way of protecting against measles, as well as mumps and rubella. MMR vaccination is offered twice

- at 1 year of age and
- as a pre-school booster at three years, four months of age

Uptake of the MMR vaccine among children has declined over the last few years which means more of people are at risk of catching and spreading this infection. Please take some time to check if your child has had two doses of the MMR vaccine by checking the vaccination section of the Red Book, and if you are unsure, contact your GP to book an appointment.

You can catch up on any missed vaccinations at any time.

There are two types of MMR vaccine available, one that does not contain porcine gelatine. Please let your GP know if you require the non-porcine vaccine.

To find out more about the MMR vaccine please see:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

English versions of this leaflet to order:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools>

and download versions in Arabic, Afrikaans, Bengali, Chinese, Cantonese, French, Hindi, Hebrew, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romani, Romanian, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Ukrainian and Yiddish.