

Measles Awareness and MMR Vaccination

Cases of measles are rising across England, including among children. It's an infection that spreads very easily and for some people can cause serious problems. It is particularly easy to catch in environments when in close contact with others, such as nurseries and schools. There are currently large outbreaks in London and Birmingham, and we have experienced some outbreaks in the south-west already. We anticipate that it is only a matter of time before we see measles outbreaks in Cornwall.

The best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine.

Key messages

- MMR is a preschool vaccination normally given at 12 months and 3 year 4 months to protect against Measles, Mumps and Rubella. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to check their children's MMR status in their red book, or contact their GP practice as soon as possible if they are not sure.
- it is never too late to catch up on any missed MMR vaccinations, contact your GP to book an appointment.
- Symptoms include a high fever, sore red watery eyes and a blotchy red-brown rash.
- Measles often starts as cold-like symptoms. NHS guidance says it is fine to send a child to school with a minor cough or common cold, **provided they don't have a temperature**. School attendance is vitally important to childrens' learning and health.
- If a child has measles they should stay off nursery or school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears, and avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system.

What you can do to help

- Check your own and your family's MMR vaccination status and book vaccinations with your GP if you are unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated. MMR is given over two doses, and both doses are needed for full protection.

If you are due to have had 2 doses of MMR but have not yet received them, no matter what age you are, you should contact your GP to get vaccinated as soon as possible. MMR vaccination is free.

If you can't remember if you have had any, 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine, check your personal child health record (the Red Book). If this doesn't help, speak to your GP.

It's better to have 2 doses of MMR vaccine now rather than risk being unprotected.

For further information see

- [MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Measles is circulating leaflet [Measles leaflet English \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [What to do if you think your child has measles and when to keep them off school - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk)