

## **Measles and vaccine information**

All children who are not up to date with all their childhood vaccines are at increased risk of serious diseases such as measles as they start mixing with other children as they are playing and learning. We are urging all parents and guardians to make sure that their children are up to date with all free routine NHS vaccines, and to know the signs and symptoms of measles.

The information below will give you an overview of measles as well as suggested information for settings to use to keep children safe.

### **Measles:**

Data published in July by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows there has been a steady rise in measles cases this year. A new risk assessment also reveals the potential for a measles resurgence, particularly in London and other areas where vaccination rates are lower. Current Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine coverage in the NHS routine childhood programme is the lowest it has been in a decade. The World Health Organisation (WHO) 95% vaccine coverage target is set to prevent outbreaks among populations. In England, coverage of two MMR doses at age 5 years is around 85%.

### **If a case of measles is reported in your setting**

Settings should contact UKHSA West Midlands Health Protection Team on Tel: 0344 20225 203560 who will provide a risk assessment and offer further advice.

Anyone with measles should be excluded from early years settings/ school or work for at least four days from when the rash first appears. As it can take up to 21 days for symptoms to develop, anyone who has been in contact with a case of measles and not had at least one dose of the MMR will need to be excluded from early years settings/ school or work for 21 days after the last contact with the infected person.

### **Health protection in education settings**

UKHSA have a [health protection in children and young people settings](#) collection which may be useful for early years colleagues. The information is designed for use by staff members in children and young people settings (for example teachers, managers, teaching assistants, and cleaners) to prevent and respond to infection, incidents and outbreaks and includes useful guidance, tools and resources.

### **Communicating with parents and guardians**

In advance of the winter months, it is recommended to utilise all communication channels to remind parents and guardians to make sure their children are up to date with all routine immunisations and to make them aware of what to do if they think they or their child has measles. See below for key information and links to resources.

## **Vaccinations and children**

Vaccinations protect against potentially fatal conditions such as measles, meningitis and septicaemia. It is particularly important for children to be up to date with routine vaccinations when they start at a new pre-school or school because they will be learning and playing with more children. If they are not up to date with their childhood vaccinations, they could be at risk of catching preventable diseases.

Being fully vaccinated helps to stop the transmission of infectious diseases and helps protect both children and staff. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) recommends encouraging parents and guardians to check that their children are protected prior to the winter months as this is when many of these illnesses arise.

### **Pre-school jobs include:**

- The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) first dose, given at one year of age.
- The MMR second dose, given at 3 years 4 months of age.
- The 4-in-1 pre-school booster which protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio which is given at 3 years 4 months of age.

Parents and guardians should check their child's personal health record (Red Book) and contact their GP surgery to ensure all routine vaccinations have been given. A full checklist of all the vaccines and the ages at which they should ideally be given is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/>

## **Measles information for parents/ guardians**

Data published in July by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows there has been a steady rise in measles cases this year. It is important for all parents/ guardians to be aware of the signs and symptoms and what action to take if you suspect you might have measles.

You are very unlikely to have measles if you've had both doses of the MMR vaccine or had measles before. Anyone who is unsure about their vaccine status can check with their GP practice to see if they are up to date and fully protected.

## **Signs and symptoms of measles**

Measles starts with cold like symptoms; high temperature, runny or blocked nose, sneezing, cough red, sore, watery eyes. Small white spots may appear inside the cheeks and on the back of the lips a few days later. These spots usually last a few days. A rash that starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body, usually appears a few days after the cold-like symptoms. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/> for more details and images.

## **What to do if you think you or your child might have measles**

Do not attend work or early years/ educational settings.

Call your GP or NHS 111 and ask for an urgent appointment if:

- you think you may have measles.
- you've been in close contact with someone who has measles and you've not had measles before, or you've not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.
- you've been in close contact with someone who has measles and you're pregnant – measles can be serious in pregnancy.
- you have a weakened immune system and think you have measles or have been in close contact with someone with measles.

Measles can spread to others easily – do not walk into your GP surgery or other healthcare setting; call first. They may suggest talking over the phone.

If you are diagnosed with measles stay home and avoid contact with others for at least four days after the onset of your rash and you feel well.

### **Resources for Measles and MMR:**

- [MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [MMR for all: general leaflet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [What do I need to know about the MMR vaccine? - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](http://blog.gov.uk)
- [Measles: how infectious is it compared to other illnesses? - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/managing-specific-infectious-diseases-a-to-z#measles>