

## Stay Strong, Get Vaccinated

### Information for parents to protect their children through vaccination

We know your child's health is your top priority and so protecting them from serious disease is incredibly important. That is why the NHS offers a free childhood vaccine programme, safeguarding your child from certain illnesses.

Vaccines work by causing the body's immune system to remember the specific infection targeted in each vaccine. If your child comes into contact with an infection and they have had their vaccines, your child's body will recognise that infection and quickly respond to fight off diseases like measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough and more.

Illnesses like measles can spread very easily between children who are not vaccinated, and such infections can have a huge impact on your child's life. They can miss out on school due to time spent unwell, be hospitalised, and even experience life-long complications and disability. In some cases, these infections can tragically cause death

Recent data shows that in 2024<sup>1</sup>, over 2,900 measles cases were confirmed in England, the highest figure in decades. As a result, the UK has lost its World Health Organization (WHO) measles elimination status. Vaccination rates also remain well below the 95% target needed to prevent outbreaks.

Health experts warn that falling vaccination rates are putting more children at risk of severe illness and long-term complications, many of which are entirely preventable through the free NHS vaccinations programme.

Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health interventions, second only to clean water. Immunisation protects millions of children from severe illness, long-term complications and death globally each year.

We understand that you may have questions about vaccine safety and effectiveness. All routine childhood vaccinations offered by the NHS have an excellent safety record.

As well as directly protecting vaccinated children, many vaccines also reduce transmission across the population, helping to protect those who are too young or too vulnerable to be vaccinated.

### What's new in 2026?

For the first time, the NHS is offering free protection against chickenpox as part of the routine childhood schedule through the MMRV vaccine. This single injection protects against:

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<sup>1</sup> [Parents urged to protect children through vaccination campaign - GOV.UK](#)

