



## Public Health and Communities Directorate

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### Think MEASLES

Dear Parent or Carer,

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has declared a national incident. This means cases of measles are on the rise in England and there is a growing public health risk.

**Measles is a serious illness, with one in five children who get the disease having to be admitted to hospital for treatment. It can spread very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools, so if you or your child have not had your MMR jab, it is vital you come forward.**

**There is no specific treatment for Measles and the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccination gives the best possible protection against illness.** Over 99% of those who have two doses of the MMR vaccine will be protected against measles and rubella. The vaccine also provides protection against mumps, which can be very painful.

Having **both** MMR vaccinations is the best way of protecting your child, family and community from measles. MMR vaccination is given at one year of age, and at 3 years 4 months by your GP however it is never too late to catch up. **If you are unsure if your child has had both vaccinations, please refer to your children's 'red book' or call your GP**

**If you or any other adults in your home have not had two doses of MMR please contact your GP surgery for a vaccination appointment or visit our website at [www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles](http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles) for details of clinics in the area.**

The initial symptoms of measles:

- Resemble a cold with runny nose, cough and a slight fever
- Eyes become red and sensitive to light

As the illness progresses, children may develop:

- A high fever
- A raised red rash that usually begins on the face and spreads downwards to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet
- Small white spots inside the cheeks and lips

For some people, measles can be very serious if it spreads to other parts of the body, such as the lungs and the brain. Problems can include pneumonia, meningitis and seizures (fits).

If you think your child may have measles:

- **Call your GP or NHS111 – do not attend your GP practice or any other healthcare setting (e.g. A&E) unless told to do so, as measles spreads very easily.**
- Avoid close contact with babies, pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system. These people are at increased risk of severe disease from measles.
- Should a rash appear stay off nursery, school or college for at least 4 days.

For more information about measles, please visit our website: [www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles](http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/measles).

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Thompson', with a long, sweeping underline.

Kuiama Thompson  
Director of Public Health & Communities

# MEASLES

## Don't let your child catch it

– get them vaccinated with the MMR vaccine

- measles outbreaks happen when not enough children have been vaccinated
- measles can be a very serious disease, leading to ear and chest infections, fits, diarrhoea, and damage to the brain. Measles can kill
- your child is at risk of measles if he or she hasn't had the MMR vaccination
- 2 doses of MMR vaccine are needed to get the best protection
- if your child is due to have had 2 doses of MMR but has not yet received them, no matter what age they are, you should contact your GP to get them vaccinated as soon as possible\*
- if you can't remember if your child has had any, 1 or 2 doses of MMR vaccine, check his or her personal child health record (the Red Book). If this doesn't help, speak to your GP
- if you don't know how many doses your child has had, it's better to have 2 doses of MMR vaccine now rather than risk leaving them unprotected

\*In response to a local outbreak then the 2 doses can be given one month apart from the age of 18 months.



# Answers to some common questions about measles and the MMR vaccine

## Why are we seeing these outbreaks of measles?

Measles is a highly infectious disease, spreading quickly from person to person, especially in schools. A child with measles will infect almost all unprotected children they have contact with. Since the end of 2017 there has been an increase in measles globally which has affected the UK. This has resulted in some spread into wider communities, in particular in undervaccinated groups.

## When are the MMR vaccinations usually given?

The best times are between 12 and 13 months of age and again at 3 years and 4 months, with one dose on each occasion. But, if your child wasn't vaccinated then, they can be vaccinated at any age with 2 doses one month apart.

## Will there be any side effects to the vaccination?

Your child may get the symptoms of measles, mumps and rubella for up to 6 weeks after the vaccination but in a very much milder form. This proves that the vaccine is working and your child is building up resistance to future contact with the viruses that cause the 3 diseases. Not all children show these symptoms but that doesn't mean the vaccine isn't working.

## Should parents in outbreak areas get vaccinated against measles?

As with many diseases, once you have had measles, you don't catch it again because you have built up a natural resistance to it. So, if you've had measles or 2 doses of MMR vaccine you do not need to get vaccinated now.

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For more information about measles and MMR go to  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/)