

MEASLES

Important information for parents and carers

The number of people catching measles is on the rise in Greater Manchester. This is because not enough people have been vaccinated against the disease. Measles is easy to catch and easy to spread especially in nurseries and schools.

Why It Matters



Some people get very sick from measles and can develop pneumonia and meningitis. One in five people with measles will go to hospital and in very rare cases people can die from the disease.

Measles is not just a childhood disease and can be serious at any age. It can make adults very ill and may cause problems for those who are pregnant and people who have weakened immune systems (who can't fight infection well).

Measles Symptoms

- a high temperature
- a runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- a cough
- a fever
- small red spots with bluish – white centres inside the mouth
- a rash that appears a few days after the cold-like symptoms, usually on the face and neck

People with measles should stay off nursery, school or work until four days after the rash first appears.

If you think you or your child may have measles, stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111 for advice. It's very important that you stay away from GP practices, A&E departments and other health care venues so you don't pass measles on to others.



1. Measles spots on the forehead

2. Measles spots in the mouth

3. Measles spots joined together

4. Measles spots on the face

5. Measles spots - raised rash

6. Measles spots on the torso

7. Measles spots on the palm of the hand

Protect and Prevent

There's no specific medical treatment for measles, so you and your child are at risk if you haven't had the *MMR or MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella and varicella - chicken pox vaccine).

To get the best protection you need to have two doses of *MMR or MMRV vaccine. Those who haven't had both doses will be more at risk.

Children under one year old are most at risk if family members and people they come into contact with are not vaccinated.


Starting nursery and school increases the risk of children being exposed to infectious diseases so it is important to protect your child.

The best times to get vaccinated are between 12 and 13 months of age and again at three years and four months. Your child will need two doses in total, one at each appointment.

If you can't remember if your child has had the *MMR or MMRV vaccine, or how many doses they've had, check their personal health record ('Red Book'). If you're still not sure, contact your GP practice.

It's never too late to catch up on missed doses, whatever your age. If you don't know how many doses you and your child have had, it's better to have two doses of the vaccine now rather than risk being unprotected.

(*MMR or MMRV according to age)



FAQs

It's natural to have some questions, here are a few key ones you may have:

Can children under 12 months receive a vaccination?

Babies over six months old can sometimes be given the vaccine earlier than usual if:

- **they may have been exposed to the measles virus**
- **there is an outbreak of measles**
- **they are travelling abroad to a country where measles is common**

The 2 usual doses of the vaccine will still be needed when they're older to ensure full protection. Children under 12 months will be given the MMRV vaccine not the MMR vaccine following changes to the childhood vaccination. This will protect them against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (varicella is also known as chicken pox)

Can I have the MMR vaccine if I'm pregnant?

An MMR vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women because it is a live vaccine. You should also avoid becoming pregnant for one month after having the MMR vaccine. It's best to let your GP or midwife know if you had the MMR vaccine while you were pregnant. Evidence suggests there will be no harm to your baby, but it's better to let them know. After your baby is born, MMR vaccinations can be given so that future pregnancies are protected. The vaccine can safely be given to people who are breastfeeding. Pregnant women are also not eligible for the MMRV vaccination.

Can I have the vaccine if I have a weakened immune system?

No, the MMR and MMRV vaccine is not recommended for people with a severely weakened immune system. For example, people receiving chemotherapy. If you have a medical condition or are taking medicine that may affect your immune system, check with your GP if it's safe for you to have the vaccine.

Does the vaccine contain pork product?

There are MMR and MMRV vaccines that do not contain pork available in the UK. When making an appointment for your child make sure you let your GP know they would like a non pork version if needed.

Can the MMR and MMRV vaccine cause autism?

The evidence is clear: there is no link between the vaccines and autism with many studies reporting on this.

For further information visit:
gmintegratedcare.org.uk/measles or
scan here

