



Measles and MMR FAQ

Measles cases are on the rise in England and across Europe. Make sure you and your family are protected against becoming seriously unwell with measles by checking you are up to date with the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) vaccine.

Across England, on average one in ten children are not up to date with their MMR vaccinations, with some areas of the country as low as two in five, putting thousands of children at risk of catching measles and the disease spreading in unvaccinated communities.

Just two doses of the MMR vaccine gives you and your family lifelong protection against catching measles.

The first vaccine is given at age one year and the second at age 3 years and 4 months, before they start school. If you've missed any doses, it's not too late to catch up. Contact your GP practice today to book an appointment to get up to date.

If you are unsure if you or your child are up to date, check your child's red book or GP records or the NHS App and make an appointment to catch up on any missed doses.

MMR FAQs

What is the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella, all of which can be serious. MMR vaccination is offered to children at around 1 year of age, with a second dose at 3 years and 4 months. Both doses are required to offer full and lasting protection for your child against these vaccine preventable diseases. Your GP practice will invite you to arrange an appointment when your child is eligible for the vaccine. If your child is older and has missed the vaccine, contact your GP practice to discuss and arrange an appointment to ensure they are fully protected.

Is the MMR vaccine live?

It is a live vaccine, which means that it contains weakened versions of measles, mumps and rubella viruses. These have been weakened enough to produce immunity without causing disease.



Does the vaccine contain pork?

In the UK, we have two MMR vaccines which work very well. One of them contains gelatine derived from pigs and the other one doesn't. If you would prefer to have the vaccine that does not contain gelatine, talk to your practice nurse or GP.

Are there any side effects with the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine is very safe. MMR vaccine is a live attenuated vaccine which means that it contains weakened versions of measles, mumps and rubella viruses. These have been weakened enough to produce immunity without causing disease. Most side effects are mild and do not last long. Side effects can include:

- the area where the needle goes in looking red, swollen and feeling sore for two to three days.
- around seven to 11 days after the injection, babies or young children may feel a bit unwell or develop a high temperature for about two or three days.
- Some children might also cry and be upset immediately after the injection. This is normal and they should feel better after a cuddle.
- It's important to remember that the possible complications of infectious conditions, such as measles, mumps and rubella, are much more serious.

Are there any circumstances that my child shouldn't have their MMR?

Almost all children can be safely vaccinated with all vaccines. In general, a vaccine should not be given to children who have had a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of the same vaccine. While the MMR vaccine is safe for children with a severe egg allergy, you should let your doctor or nurse know if you or your child has had severe allergic reactions to gelatine, an antibiotic called neomycin, egg allergies.

Can pregnant women have the MMR?

As a precaution, the MMR vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women. You should also avoid becoming pregnant for one month after having the MMR vaccine.

What is the consent process for vaccination?

Parents, carers or those with parental responsibilities for young children should attend vaccination appointments with their child to give consent for them to receive vaccination. For looked after children, please refer to the care plan where permissions and restrictions of consent will be outlined.

How can my child get the MMR vaccine?



The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) protects against these three potentially serious illnesses. With rates of measles cases increasing, vaccination is more important than ever. Two MMR doses are needed to give effective protection and will be offered through your child's GP practice. The first dose is given after your child's first birthday and the second dose is given at 3 years 4 months old, or soon after, to protect the child before they start school. The vaccine is given by injection into the leg or upper arm.

How does the MMR vaccine work?

Your child's immune system responds to the vaccine by producing cells which recognise and remember each of the three viruses. If they are in contact with any of the diseases in the future, these cells will wake up and activate their body to rapidly produce antibodies. The vaccine is very good at providing protection against measles, mumps and rubella. Over 99% of those who have two doses of the vaccine will be protected against measles and rubella. Although mumps protection is slightly lower, cases in vaccinated people are much less severe. This protection is usually long lasting.

Is the MMR vaccine safe?

The MMR vaccine has been safely protecting children for many years in many countries worldwide. In the UK, millions of doses have been given since it was introduced in 1988. Before vaccines can be used, they have to be thoroughly tested for safety. Many studies have taken place to look at the safety and effectiveness of MMR vaccine. The evidence is clear that there is no link between MMR vaccine and autism.

What if my child is ill on the day of their appointment?

If your child is unwell with a temperature on the day of the vaccine you will need to rebook an appointment once your child is feeling better.

Measles FAQs

What is measles?

Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent it. Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash a few days later. Some people may also get small spots in their mouth. First symptoms, before the rash appears include



- cold-like symptoms
- a high temperature
- a runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- a cough
- red, sore, watery eyes

It is very important that if you think your child might have measles, that you call your GP practice or NHS 111 first before coming to a health facility. This is so arrangements can be made for your child to be seen safely without putting other people in the waiting room at risk.

Can getting measles, mumps and rubella be serious?

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly infectious illnesses that can easily spread between unvaccinated people. These diseases can lead to serious problems such as meningitis and hearing loss. Most people are vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella and since the vaccine was introduced in 1988, these conditions have become rare in the UK as the vaccine is good at providing protection.

How can my child / how can I get measles?

Measles is a virus that spreads through the air and is passed on by coughs and sneezes. Those who have measles are infectious before they have any spots. The virus is highly infectious and one infected person with measles will infect nine out of ten unvaccinated people if they spend 15 minutes or more with them.

Is measles just a childhood disease?

Measles is more common in young children, but anyone unvaccinated is at risk of getting measles and becoming seriously unwell.

Is measles not just a rash that goes away?

Measles can be serious and lead to long term health problems, such as blindness in rare cases. Most people who get measles feel very unwell for up to two weeks. There is no medical treatment for measles. One in five will need a hospital visit and one in 15 will have complications from getting measles.