



Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

MAKING SURE
YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE PROTECTED



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Why it's important that young people are protected against measles, mumps and rubella

The number of young people catching measles across the UK is rising, mainly due to a group of young people, now aged 10–17, who were not immunised due to concerns about vaccine safety at that time.

Measles is highly infectious and can be a dangerous illness. A cough or a sneeze can spread the measles virus over a wide area. Measles spreads easily in schools and other places where young people gather together.

It is important that all young people have had two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to fully protect them against measles, mumps and rubella. It is never too late to be immunised.

NHSScotland is writing to all 10–17 year olds who may not be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella. If your child has not been immunised fully, they will be invited for immunisation over the coming weeks to make sure that they are protected.

Currently, young people aged 10–17 are the group most at risk of being infected by the measles virus and passing it to others.

MMR: Making sure young people are protected

What about younger children?

The MMR vaccine is offered to children between 12 and 13 months of age, with a second dose given at 3 years 4 months. Uptake of the vaccine has increased over the last 10 years, and now over 95% of children aged 5 years have had at least one dose. However, it is important that younger children have two doses of MMR vaccine when they are due in order to be sure that they are protected against measles.

Parents of younger children should contact their GP if their younger child has missed a dose of MMR, offered as part of the Routine Childhood Immunisation Programme in Scotland (see the back cover of this leaflet).

What are measles, mumps and rubella?

Measles is a very infectious virus that causes a fever, cough and rash. It can spread easily and cause serious complications, such as pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). It lasts for several days and, even if there are no serious complications, it is unpleasant.

Mumps causes fever and painful, swollen glands in the face and neck. Mumps is spread in the same way as measles and can cause a mild form of meningitis.

Rubella (German measles) causes a rash and fever, and is usually a very mild illness. If caught in pregnancy it can cause serious damage to an unborn child.

How to protect young people against measles, mumps and rubella

To be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella young people need **two separate doses** of the MMR vaccine.

Your child should have received two doses of the MMR vaccine, the first dose at around 13 months and another before starting school. If your child didn't have both doses, they may still be at risk.

If your child hasn't previously had two doses of the MMR vaccine, or they have only had one dose, they will be invited for immunisation now. The second dose increases protection and is given a month after the first dose.

What is the MMR vaccine and is it effective?

The MMR vaccine contains weakened versions of live measles, mumps and rubella viruses. Because the viruses are weakened, they do not cause the illnesses. If your child recently had the MMR vaccine they cannot infect other people.

The MMR vaccine is highly effective and has been shown to be very safe. It has been responsible for protecting Scottish children and young people from these three illnesses since it was introduced in 1988.

How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is injected into the muscle of the upper arm.

MMR: Making sure young people are protected

Are there any reasons your child shouldn't have the MMR vaccine?

You should talk to your GP or nurse if your child is 'immunosuppressed' because they are having treatment for a serious condition, such as a transplant or cancer. You should also tell your GP or nurse if your child has a condition that affects their immune system, such as severe primary immunodeficiency.

Are there any side effects with the MMR vaccine?

A few people experience mild side effects from the MMR vaccine. Side effects of MMR may be:

- A mild rash (this rash is not infectious) or fever that develops a week or two after the vaccine and lasts one to three days
- swollen lymph glands that develop two to three weeks later
- sore or stiff joints that can last from a couple of days to a few weeks.

These side effects will pass in a short time.

Only on very rare occasions can MMR cause serious side effects, and the numbers are small compared to the side effects caused by the real illnesses. For example, a child with measles who has not had the vaccine has a 1 in 1000 chance of developing encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). The chance of a child developing encephalitis after the first dose of MMR is less than 1 in 1 million.

Speak to your GP or nurse if you are at all concerned.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, talk to your GP, practice nurse or school nurse, or call the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (text phone 18001 0800 22 44 88). The helpline is open every day 8 am to 10 pm and also provides an interpreting service).

You can report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card Scheme. This can be done online by visiting **www.yellowcard.gov.uk** or by calling the Yellow Card hotline on **0808 100 3352** (available Monday to Friday – 10 am to 2 pm).

This information is also available at:
www.immunisescotland.com/mmrcatch-up

MMR: Making sure young people are protected

This publication is available online at www.healthscotland.com or telephone 0131 536 5500.

Traditional Chinese

您也可以登入 www.healthscotland.com 瀏覽本刊物，或撥打 **0131 536 5500** 查詢。

Polish

Ta publikacja jest dostępna online na stronie www.healthscotland.com lub pod numerem telefonu **0131 536 5500**, gdzie można także zgłaszać wszelkie zapytania.

Urdu

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یا کسی سوالات کے لیے **0131 536 5500** پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

This resource is available in Urdu, Chinese and Polish, and in an Easy Read format. NHS Health Scotland is happy to consider requests for other languages and formats. Please contact **0131 536 5500** or email nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net

Routine Childhood Immunisation Programme

All immunisations are given as a single injection into the muscle of the thigh or upper arm, except rotavirus, which is given by mouth (orally).

When to immunise	Diseases protected against	Vaccine given
2 months old	• Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	• DTaP/IPV/Hib
	• Pneumococcal disease	• PCV
	• Rotavirus	• Rotavirus vaccine
3 months old	• Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib	• DTaP/IPV/Hib
	• Meningococcal group C disease (MenC)	• MenC
	• Rotavirus	• Rotavirus vaccine
4 months old	• Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Hib	• DTaP/IPV/Hib
	• Pneumococcal disease	• PCV
Between 12 and 13 months old – within a month of the first birthday	• Hib/MenC	• Hib/MenC
	• Pneumococcal disease	• PCV
	• Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles)	• MMR
3 years 4 months old or soon after	• Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio	• dTaP/IPV or DTaP/IPV
	• Measles, mumps and rubella	• MMR (check first dose has been given)
Girls aged 12 to 13 years old	• Cervical cancer caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) types 16 and 18	• HPV vaccine
13 to 18 years old	• Tetanus, diphtheria and polio	• Td/IPV, and check MMR status
	• MenC	• MenC