

11 April 2024

Middlesbrough Council
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TS1 2DT

Dear Parent

Measles is spreading in South Tees. Make sure your child is protected.

There have been over 1,000 confirmed cases of measles reported in England since Autumn 2023 and cases have been seen in our region. Measles spreads very easily. While most infections are mild, measles can cause very serious complications.

The best protection is the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccination (MMR). Children need two doses to be fully protected. **If you are not sure whether your child has received two doses of MMR, check their red book or ask your GP surgery.**

Children who have not received two doses of MMR are at significantly increased risk of catching measles. **If you or your child have missed out, contact your GP surgery to catch up as soon as possible and help to stop the spread.**

MMR is safe and effective: many millions of doses have been given in the UK. If you have any concerns about your child having MMR, including any ethical or religious concerns, please speak to your GP.

Measles symptoms include runny nose and cough, a fever, sore red watery eyes, and a blotchy red-brown rash on the face and body.

If your child has these symptoms, **urgently phone your GP surgery or NHS 111**. It is important to let the surgery know that you suspect measles so that they can protect other patients at the practice.

To protect others, **keep your child at home for at least four days from when the rash first appears**. Avoid contact with vulnerable people, such as babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.

For more information about measles click [here](#), for more information about the MMR vaccine click [here](#).

Yours faithfully,



Mark Adams
Joint Director of Public Health
Public Health South Tees



Clare Mahoney
Assistant Director Education & Skills
Redcar & Cleveland Council



VACCINATION

**This leaflet explains about
measles, mumps and rubella and
the MMR vaccination.**

**One vaccination helps to protect
against all three diseases.**



Words that we use:

If a word is in **bold** in the leaflet, it will be in this list.

Allergic/allergy – something that you have a reaction to e.g. food, medication and or animal bites/insect stings

Allergist – someone who studies allergies

Anaphylactic reaction – the reaction to an allergy which may cause the body to feeling faint, fast heartbeat and swelling of certain body parts

Asthma – a condition that can affect your breathing

Booster vaccination – a second **vaccination** to make sure that you are protected against the virus

Complications – extra factors that could lead to other health problems

Contraception – ways of stopping people getting pregnant when they have sex

Dose – the amount of the vaccine you need to have to have **immunity**

Encephalitis – inflammation of the brain that is caused by infection. This can cause flu-like **symptoms** and lead to seizures, difficulty speaking and feeling weak

Gelatine – clear jelly that is made from animal products. Not suitable for some special diets

German measles (rubella) – one of the parts of the MMR vaccine

Glands – round items that are in the back of the mouth

GP – general practice doctor

GP surgery – local doctors

Immunity – when you've been vaccinated and protected from the viruses



Words that we use: continued

Immune system – the part of your body that makes you stay healthy

Immunosuppressed – when someone doesn't have a strong **immune system** to fight against disease and illness

Infectious – when you can easily transmit the disease from person to person

Live vaccine – the vaccine contains small parts of the viruses

MMR – measles, mumps and rubella

MMR vaccine Injection – how they give you the vaccine

Meningitis – inflammation of the lining around the brain. This can lead to a headache, a stiff neck and feeling sick

Neomycin/penicillin – two forms of antibiotics that can help with recovery for viral infections

Occupational health service – to help support people in the workplace, addressing health problems when they arise and reassuring workers that the workplace is safe

Pancreas – a part of the body. It produces juices called enzymes. Enzymes help break down food in our bodies

Practice nurse – nurses in **GP surgeries**. They help treat, educate and assess patients

Rash – small red, sometimes itchy, spots

Side effects – other **symptoms** you might get after the vaccine

Symptoms – signs of a disease

UK National Vaccination programme – the place that explains how, when, what and why vaccines are there for us

Vaccination – medicine to stop you from getting sick with this disease

Viral illness – when you get a virus that give takes over your body. Some **symptoms** include sore throat, runny nose, cough.



What is Measles?

It is a very **infectious viral illness** that is spread by coughing and sneezing.

If you catch it, you could be very poorly for around 10 days.

There is no cure for **Measles**.



Symptoms include:



- Fever



- Cold-like symptoms



- A rash



- Sore red eyes



Is Measles Serious?

Yes, it can be.



About 1 in 5 people go to hospital and 1 in 15 people will develop severe **complications**.

Complications can include:



- Fits



Deaf

- Deafness
- **Encephalitis**
- Brain Damage



What is Mumps?

It is a **viral illness** that is spread by coughs and sneezes, or from close contact with an infected person.

It can last around 2 weeks and will require bed rest and eating soft food due to swollen **glands** around the face.

Most cases occur in young adults who haven't been vaccinated against it.

There is no cure for **Mumps**.



Symptoms include:



- Fever
- Headache
- Swollen **glands** around the face, giving the appearance of having a 'hamster face'.



Is Mumps Serious?

Yes, it can be.



Deaf

It can have very painful **complications** for some people.

Around **1 in 20** people can suffer temporary hearing loss.

Complications can include:



- **Encephalitis**
- Brain Damage
- Painful **inflammation** of the ovaries or testicles and in rare cases, the **pancreas**.



What is Rubella?

It is often known as '**German Measles**'.

It is a **viral illness** that is now rare in the UK, thanks to the **MMR vaccine**.



It is spread in a similar way to **Measles** and **Mumps**.

It is usually mild for most people and can last for 7-10 days.

Symptoms include:



- Fever



- A **rash**



- Swollen **glands**
- Sore throat



Is Rubella Serious?

Yes, if you are pregnant.



It can cause serious illness in unborn babies.

Complications for unborn babies can include:



- Blindness



- Deafness



- Heart problems



- Brain Damage and death



What is the MMR Vaccine?

The **MMR vaccine** is the safest way to protect yourself against **Measles, Mumps** and **Rubella**.



- 1 It is **one vaccine** given by a single **injection** into the thigh of young children, or the upper arm in older children/ adults.



It is a **live vaccine** containing weakened versions of **Measles, Mumps** and **Rubella viruses** that produce **immunity** without making you ill.



- 2 The **MMR vaccine** gives long lasting protection against **Measles, Mumps** and **Rubella** in just **two doses**.

- 3 The **MMR vaccine** protects against **three** infections: **Measles, Mumps** and **Rubella**.



These are **viral infections** that spread more easily than the common cold, among unprotected children and adults.



You can check with your **GP** whether you have had the **vaccine**. Having extra **doses** will not cause you any harm.



Who Should Have the MMR Vaccine?

- Young children
- Older children, teenagers and young adults
- Women of childbearing age
- Older adults
- If you were born or brought up abroad



Young Children



Young children should be offered two **doses** of the **vaccine** as part of the **UK national vaccination programme**.

- The first **dose** is given to children at age 12 months.
- The second **dose** at age 3 years 4 months, before starting school.

Older Children, Teenagers and Young Adults



For older children, teenagers and young adults, who have never had **MMR vaccine**, or only one **dose**:

Contact your **GP surgery** to catch up with your **doses**.

If you had one **dose** of the **vaccine** as a young child, you only need one more, no matter how long ago that first **dose** was.

Women of Childbearing Age



If you are a woman of childbearing age, you should have two **doses** of **MMR vaccine** before you become pregnant.

Check with your **GP surgery** if you are unsure about whether you have had them or not.

As it is a **live vaccine**, avoid getting pregnant for one month after your vaccination.

Use a reliable method of **contraception** during this time.

If you are pregnant or have just had a baby and are not sure whether you had two **doses** of **MMR vaccine**:

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.



Older Adults



Older adults born in the UK before 1970 are likely to have had the three infections as children.

They may also have had the single **Measles** or **Rubella vaccinations** available before **MMR** was introduced.



If you unsure about whether you had these infections or the **vaccinations**:

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.

You need two doses, one month apart.



One month



Extra **doses** will not do you any harm as your **immune system** will recognise and destroy the **vaccine viruses**.

Born or Brought up Abroad



If you were born or brought up abroad, you may need two **doses** of MMR vaccine.

This is because not all countries use the combined MMR vaccine.

If you are unsure about what vaccines you have received whilst living abroad:

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.



How Safe is the MMR Vaccine?

The combined **MMR vaccine** has been safely protecting children for many years, worldwide.

All **vaccines** must be thoroughly tested for safety before they can be used.





Any **side effects** are usually mild and less severe than the disease itself.

Serious reactions after **vaccination** are rare.

Evidence from safety studies into the **vaccine** show no link between **MMR vaccine** and Autism.



Does the **MMR Vaccine** work?

Over 99% of people who have two **doses** of the **vaccine** will be protected against **Measles** and **Rubella**.

Cases of **Mumps** in vaccinated people are much less severe.

Since **MMR** was introduced in 1988, it is now rare for children to develop these infections.



However:



Outbreaks of **Measles** and **Mumps** have occurred in recent years due to lower uptakes of the **vaccination**.

It is important to make sure you are protected by having two **doses** of **MMR vaccine**.

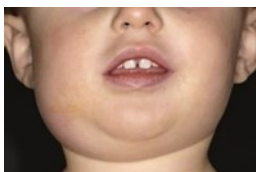


What are the Side Effects of the MMR Vaccine?

Not everyone gets **side effects** from the **vaccine**.

Side effects can include:

- A **rash** around 6-10 days after **vaccination**.
- Face swelling around 2-3 weeks after **vaccination**.
- Joint pains around 2-3 weeks after **vaccination**.



- Occasionally, a reddish-purple **rash** like tiny bruises can occur up to six weeks following a **vaccination**.

These **side effects** occur in a small percentage of people after their first **dose**.

They are usually seen when the **vaccine** is starting to work.

They normally only last 2-3 days.

They are not **infectious** to other people.



Why should I or my children have the vaccine?

By having **MMR vaccine**, you are:

Protecting yourself against three serious **infections**.

You are also helping protect others who can't have the **vaccine**.

You will be helping to prevent large outbreaks of **disease**.





You should also have the **vaccine** if you work with young children or care for people. This is because:

Passing on **Measles** to children too young to be vaccinated, or to someone who is already ill can have very serious effects on their health.



Is there anyone who shouldn't or can't have MMR vaccine?

Yes

These include:

- Infants too young to have the **vaccine**.
- Children/adults who can't have the **vaccine**, due to a weakened **immune system**.
- Pregnant women.





- If you have had a confirmed **anaphylactic reaction** to **Neomycin**.

If you are unsure about whether you or your children should have the **vaccination**:

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.



Does the MMR Vaccine Contain Gelatine?

There are two MMR vaccines which work well:

- One contains **gelatine** derived from pigs.
- One is **gelatine-free**.



If you have had an **anaphylactic reaction** to **gelatine**

OR

If you would prefer the **gelatine-free vaccine** for other reasons

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.





What if I am Allergic to Eggs or the Vaccine Itself?



People who are **allergic** to eggs, including children with **asthma**, can have their **MMR vaccine** at their **GP surgery**.

Anyone who has had a documented **anaphylactic reaction** to **MMR vaccine** itself should be assessed by an **Allergist**.



Where Can I Get the MMR Vaccine?

From your **GP surgery**:

- All children aged 1 year to 3 years 4 months.
- Older children and adults.
- Women after they have given birth.





At your school:

- Adolescents and young adults can be offered their missing **doses** of **MMR vaccine** with other teenage **booster vaccinations**.



From your employer's **occupational health service:**

- Health care workers with direct patient contact.



Remember

It is never too late to have the vaccine if you haven't had two **doses**.

2x





Need more information about MMR vaccine?

Please visit:



- www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/mmr-vaccine.aspx

Or

- Speak to your **GP** or **practice nurse**.





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<https://www.kiddieseyecare.com.au/news/congenital-cataracts-in-a-baby-caused-by-the-rubella-virus-otherwise-known-as-german-measles>

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