

Measles, mumps and rubella in children



How to protect your child

Vaccines are our best protection

Two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine are needed to provide effective and life-long protection against measles, mumps and rubella. These conditions can affect both adults and children.



The first dose of the MMR vaccine is often given to babies at one year of age, followed by the second dose when the child is aged about three years and four months.

Adults and children who have missed one, or both doses of the MMR vaccine can get theirs now. For your free MMR vaccine make an appointment at your GP practice.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if you or your child:

- may have measles
- is under 1 year old and has come into contact with someone who has measles
- are pregnant or have a weakened immune system and been in close contact with someone who has measles
- have a high temperature that has not come down after taking paracetamol or ibuprofen
- have difficulty breathing – you may feel more short of breath than usual
- is not feeding well, or taking less feeds or fluids than usual are peeing less than usual (or your baby has fewer wet nappies)
- feels very unwell, or you're worried something is seriously wrong.

What are measles, mumps and rubella?

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed a few days later by a rash of flat or slightly raised spots, that start on the face before spreading down the body.

- On paler skin, the rash can look red or reddish-brown
- On black or brown skin the rash might look browner and be harder to see
- These spots can join together to make blotches. It might be very pigmented and feel bumpy.



Images from www.swLondon-healthiertogether.nhs.uk

Measles usually starts to get better in about a week, but you need to be alert to complications.

Dr Drysdale says, "If someone has measles, mumps or rubella, there isn't a cure. We can treat symptoms and any complications. But we can't cure the disease."

Measles can lead to serious complications including pneumonia and brain infections. While these complications are rare, sadly, **one in five** children with measles will need to go to hospital. If you think you or your child has measles, call your doctor for advice.

If you are unsure about whether you and your child have been vaccinated against measles you can check your child's health records, also known as their red book, or ask their GP practice.



Dr Simon Drysdale is a children's hospital doctor in Oxford

Measles spread easily

If you or your child are unvaccinated you are at high risk of catching measles. It spreads easily and **nine out of ten** unvaccinated children can catch measles if someone in their class has it. Dr Drysdale says:

"To reduce the risk of passing it to those who are more vulnerable, like babies, the elderly, people prone to infections or unvaccinated pregnant mothers, please keep your child away from school for at least four days from when the rash first appears. Also wash hands regularly with soap and water."



Mumps is often seen as painful swellings in the side of the face under the ears, and is often described as giving someone a 'hamster face' appearance. Dr Drysdale says:

"Thankfully, complications from mumps are rare, but it can lead to viral meningitis or swelling of the testicles or ovaries."

Rubella (which some people call German measles) has a spotty rash that starts on the face or behind the ears and spreads to the neck and body. Thanks to vaccination, getting Rubella in pregnancy is very rare. Dr Drysdale says:

"There is a real risk that if someone gets rubella in early pregnancy, it could seriously harm their baby's health and even lead to pregnancy loss, so seek urgent advice."

www.nhs.uk/mmr

