



UK Health
Security
Agency

Communications Toolkit – MMR and Measles 2023

Background:

UKHSA is investigating increased cases of measles in England since January 2023. Cases so far identified include children and adults; many with recent travel history.

Uptake of the MMR vaccine among children has also seen a steady decline over the last few years which means more of the population are potentially exposed to infection.

As we enter the warmer months, we can expect increased mixing in a variety of settings including at festivals, through foreign travel and social events.

The risk to the UK population remains low, but we are asking people to be alert to signs and symptoms and ensure that they or their children have received two doses of the MMR vaccination

UKHSA is rapidly investigating the source of these infections and is following the epidemiology and the evidence of where transmission is occurring to target messaging; ensuring clear facts are communicated about increases in cases and what people need to do.

UKHSA local Health Protection Teams are contacting all confirmed cases to help identify and trace contacts so that the appropriate public health action can be taken to prevent transmission to others.

This communications toolkit is to support UKHSA and its partners with managing local and regional communications and signpost to the latest materials.

Key public health messages

Since the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1968 it is estimated that 20 million measles cases and 4,500 deaths have been prevented in the UK.

Measles is highly contagious and can lead to complications such as ear infections, pneumonia, and inflammation of the brain which require hospitalisation and on rare occasions can lead to long term disability or death.

Spending 15 minutes or more in direct contact with someone infected with measles is enough to catch the infection. People whose immunity is compromised, pregnant women and unvaccinated children are at increased risk of severe disease.

Measles symptoms to be aware of include:

- high fever
- sore, red, watery eyes
- coughing
- aching and feeling generally unwell
- a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

Anyone with symptoms that could be measles is advised to stay at home and phone their GP or NHS 111 for advice, rather than visiting the surgery or A&E. This is because measles spreads very quickly and easily and so it is important to try and prevent the illness spreading further.

People who have symptoms should also especially try to stay away from areas where you could come into contact with vulnerable people such as schools, nurseries or care homes.

The free MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way of protecting against measles, as well as mumps and rubella.

For more information about measles, see the nhs.uk website [here](#).

Call to action

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness, so anyone with symptoms is advised to stay at home and phone their GP or NHS 111 for advice, rather than visiting the surgery or A&E, to prevent the illness spreading further.

Anyone who is unsure if their child is up to date with all their routine vaccinations should check their child's Red Book (personal child health record) in the first instance.

If you are still not sure, or if you need to bring your child up to date with their vaccines, contact your GP practice to check and book an appointment.

To find out more about childhood vaccinations, please visit the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

Stakeholder communications

The below Briefing Note was cascaded to health partners on Tuesday 2 May 2023

[20230502_BN2023_017_Measles update and preventing resurgence v01.00.pdf](#)

Social media assets

Copy for social posts and alternative text (Measles specific)

All the below assets can be found at this link also:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A6l0pgaEqNxJ0godJXFCUqb4qJf20j2_



Alternate text: Measles: Are you protected? You need 2 doses of MMR vaccine for lifelong protection. If you haven't had both doses, you could be at risk. Contact your GP and book an appointment if you're not up to date.

Post copy option 1

Measles – are you protected? For lifelong protection, you need 2 doses of the #MMR vaccine.

If not, you could be at risk – if you need to get a catch up jab, contact your GP.

Post copy option 2


Getting lifelong protection against #measles is simple – you just need to have 2 doses of the #MMR vaccine. If you think you or a loved one isn't up to date, contact your GP to book a catch up appointment.



Alternate text: GIF. What is measles? It's a viral illness that can be serious and sometimes fatal. Spending 15 mins with someone with measles is enough to get the virus. Symptoms of measles: include high fever, runny nose, cough, red and watery eyes, small red spots with a bluish-white centre inside the mouth. A rash can appear later, usually on the face, upper neck, hands and feet, fading after 5 to 6 days. If you've not been vaccinated against measles you can be at risk, but it's most common in young children. Someone with measles can spread the virus up to 4 days before a rash appears, and up to 4 days after.

Post copy option 1

Did you know?

 15 mins with someone who had measles is enough time for the virus to be passed on.

Measles can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences, so make sure you're up to date with #MMR vaccinations, and ask your GP about catch up jabs if you need.

Post copy option 2

Here are some of the key things you need to know about #measles and what to do if you or a loved one needs to get up to date with their #MMR vaccinations. ↓



Alternate text: Measles is still common in many countries worldwide. Make sure you and your loved ones are up to date with #MMR vaccinations or contact your GP if you need to catch up before you travel.

Post copy option 1

Measles can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences and is still common in many countries worldwide. Before you travel, make sure you & your loved ones are up to date with #MMR vaccinations.

Post copy option 2

Passport

Boarding pass

#MMR vaccinations

Complete your travel checklist and make sure you and your loved ones are up to date with vaccinations, including #MMR. Contact your GP if you need to get any catch up jabs.



Alternate text: Going away in the school holidays? Make sure your child is protected from measles. Two doses of the MMR vaccine provides lifelong protection – if they're not up to date, contact your GP before you travel.

Post copy option 1

If you're planning to travel abroad during the school holidays, make sure to check your child is up to date with their vaccinations, including the #MMR vaccine. Contact your GP to book any catch up jabs before you travel → 🏠 🏫

Post copy option 2

Planning on going abroad for the school holidays? Before you go, check that your children are up to date with their vaccinations, including the #MMR vaccine.




Alternate text: GIF. What is measles? It's a viral illness that can be serious and sometimes fatal. Spending 15 mins with someone with measles is enough to get the virus. Symptoms of

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Did you know?

 15 mins with someone who had measles is enough time for the virus to be passed on.

Measles can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences, so make sure you're up to date with #MMR vaccinations, and ask your GP about catch up jabs if you need.

Post copy option 2

Here are some of the key things you need to know about #measles and what to do if you or a loved one needs to get up to date with their #MMR vaccinations. ↓

UKHSA Blogs:

[What do I need to know about the MMR vaccine? - UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/05/ensuring-every-child-gets-the-best-start-in-life-starting-with-vaccine-protection/)

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/05/ensuring-every-child-gets-the-best-start-in-life-starting-with-vaccine-protection/>

Social media banners:

MMR for all the family social media/WhatsApp friendly banners <https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/rhrtl6io3fuimougtp6zt2xj3ue8jdg>

Assets for festivals and gatherings:

Festival banners for MMR <https://publichealthengland-immunisati.box.com/s/vppbluehlhczb1eixb0c2rop2al7x8lh>

Videos on routine MMR vaccination

<https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/ArticleSearch.html?sp=Sreset&keyword=IMMS>

For universities

A [MMR, MenACWY and COVID-19 vaccines communications toolkit for universities](#) is available to download.

Print ready materials

UKHSA have developed the following:

Leaflet on measles (in range of languages)

English versions of this leaflet to order <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-schools> and download versions in Arabic, Afrikaans, Bengali, Chinese, Cantonese, French, Hindi, Hebrew, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romani, Romanian, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Ukrainian and Yiddish.

MMR Leaflet

MMR for all leaflet – now available to order in [English](#), [Bengali](#), [Polish](#), [Romanian](#), [Somali](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Yoruba](#)

Think Measles patient leaflet

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-measles-patient-leaflet-for-young-people>

Think Measles poster for young people

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-measles-poster-about-measles-in-young-people>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-protect-yourself-protect-others>

Resources for education settings

Primary, secondary school and nursery reminder postcards to send to parents and posters paper copies available to order now to get ready

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisations-resources-for-schools>

Resources for GP

Measles outbreak poster for GPs and outbreak poster and leaflet as simple text version in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-outbreak> Czech, Arabic, Spanish, Romani and Romanian

Media handling

UKHSA regional communications teams are currently leading the communications response.

We would advise local areas and services strict adherence NOT to disclose further information regarding confirmed, possible, or suspected cases.

If local areas receive media queries, please make sure you link in with your regional UKHSA communications lead - contacts here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency/about/media-enquiries>

Template UKHSA regional statement

Specialists from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) are working with NHS and local authority partners following xx confirmed cases of measles in a (LA) school.

To help reduce the risk of further measles cases UKHSA is advising everyone to be alert to signs and symptoms and urge people to check their families are fully vaccinated against measles.

Measles is extremely infectious and sadly in some instances can have very serious long term and life changing consequences. The best protection against measles is the MMR vaccination.

It is important that anyone who hasn't already had two doses of the MMR vaccine contacts their GP surgery for an appointment to get vaccinated.

The symptoms of measles can include cold-like symptoms, sore red eyes, a high temperature and a red-brown blotchy rash. If you experience these symptoms seek medical attention but be sure to phone ahead before you visit your GP surgery or other healthcare setting, so arrangements can be made to prevent others from being infected.

Notes to Editors

For further information about measles, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>

Information about the MMR vaccine can be found by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Local Authority media handling

Any media queries relating to measles or MMR please liaise closely with your UKHSA regional contact.

NHS media handling

NHS colleagues please liaise with your NHSE regional team.

NHS materials

Simple internal comms messaging for NHS orgs

There has been an increase in the number of measles cases reported to UKHSA nationally this year.

As you'll be aware, measles is one of the most highly infectious communicable diseases. Spending 15 minutes or more in direct contact with someone infected with measles is considered a significant exposure.

All staff should ensure they are fully up to date with MMR vaccinations and if there is any uncertainty, please consult with your Occupational Health team or GP.

Measles symptoms can include:

- a high fever

- cough and/or runny nose
- Sore, red, watery eyes
- Koplik spots (small red spots with bluish-white centres) inside the mouth
- A red-brown blotchy rash, which usually appears after several days and often starts on the face and upper neck, before spreading across the body

Further information on measles can be found on www.nhs.uk

Template communications article for internal / external channels

Measles cases prompt MMR vaccine call

UKHSA has reported an increase in measles across the country and is encouraging people to check that they and their children have had two doses of the MMR vaccine.

The free MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way of protecting against measles, as well as mumps and rubella.

It's important for parents to take up the offer of MMR vaccination for their children when offered at 1 year of age and as a pre-school booster at three years, four months of age. If children and young adults have missed these vaccinations in the past, it's important to take up the vaccine now from GPs, particularly in light of the recent cases.

Check your child's Red Book to see if they've received MMR vaccinations as scheduled or check with your GP surgery if you're unsure. Most healthy adults will have developed some immunity to measles but can still receive two doses of the vaccine from their GP too.

Anyone with symptoms is also being advised to stay at home and phone their GP or NHS 111 for advice.

Measles symptoms to be aware of include:

- high fever
- sore, red, watery eyes
- coughing
- aching and feeling generally unwell
- a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

For more information about measles, see the nhs.uk website [here](#).

Useful links

Measles strategy document <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-and-rubella-elimination-uk-strategy> with helpful case studies LA level

Immunisation up to one year in English here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisations-between-12-and-13-months-of-age>

The MMR is featured in the new version of the

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-school-vaccinations-a-guide-to-vaccinations-from-2-to-5-years> Paper copies available in English now.

And also, in the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisations-for-young-people> Paper copies available in English now.