

How to protect yourself and your family from measles

What is measles?

There have been recent cases of measles across the West Midlands. Measles is highly infectious and can lead to serious health complications, especially in children under 1, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system. Birmingham faces higher risks of measles spreading as fewer people have had both doses of the immunisation.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms. The first symptoms of measles include:

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



A rash usually appears a few days after the cold-like symptoms. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body. Some people may also get small spots in their mouth, particularly inside the cheeks and on the back of the lips. To learn more about symptoms, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>.

What should you do if you or your child has suspected measles?

If your child develops symptoms, urgently contact your GP. Please contact the surgery by telephone before visiting and tell the reception staff that you think that your child may have measles. Do not attend the surgery unless you are asked to, nor should you attend A&E. The doctor will advise on what to do, and will make special arrangements to see your child so that if they have measles, they won't pass it on to others.

How can you protect yourself and your family from measles?

The MMRV immunisation, which has now replaced the MMR immunisation, helps protect children against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox (varicella).

Children are offered two doses when they are 12 and 18 months old as part of the NHS immunisation schedule. Older children, born on or after 1st January 2020, will be offered one or two doses of MMRV.

A pork-free version of the MMRV immunisation, called Priorix-Tetra, is also available at all GP surgeries.

The MMRV immunisation is safe, effective, and free of charge. It does NOT cause autism – numerous studies have proven there is no link between the immunisation and autism.

The MMR vaccine is still available for older children and adults born on or before 31st December 2019 who were not vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella when they were younger.

For more information on the MMRV immunisation, **scan this QR code** or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

