



UK Health
Security
Agency

UKHSA London Region
0300 303 0450
london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk

For PII please use:
phe.london.region@nhs.net
www.gov.uk/ukhsa



england.londonprimarycare@nhs.net
www.england.nhs.uk/london

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Dear Primary Care Colleagues,

Re: Resurgence of measles in London

Key Points

- Measles cases are increasing across London. All patients with suspected measles (rash and fever) should be isolated immediately on arrival to protect other patients.
- Please notify all suspected measles cases promptly to UKHSA to facilitate timely access to post-exposure immunoglobulin for individuals in risk groups.
- During this period of increased activity, UKHSA will prioritise health protection actions for contacts of measles cases who are immunosuppressed, pregnant or infants aged under 1 year. Please check and inform UKHSA if there have been any contacts in these three priority groups during the case's infectious period.
- Please continue to vaccinate all children with MMR as per the routine immunisation schedule and to offer MMR opportunistically to all eligible individuals without two recorded doses of MMR. There is no upper age limit to offering MMR vaccine.
- All healthcare workers (and staff who have direct contact with patients) should have satisfactory evidence of protection against measles.
- A list of relevant guidance can be found in the appendix of this letter.

Thank you for your continued efforts in dealing with suspected measles cases in London. UKHSA and NHS colleagues are working together to monitor and respond to an increase in measles cases across London.

In the four weeks since 27 May 2024, almost half (48%) of all confirmed cases in England have been in London. In March, April and May 2024, the number of confirmed measles cases in London have been the highest seen per calendar month since at least 2012. Data on the number of laboratory confirmed cases is updated weekly [here](#). In addition to the laboratory confirmed cases, a very large number of clinically suspected cases have also been reported to UKHSA.

In July 2023, UKHSA published a measles [risk assessment](#) which concluded that a measles outbreak of between 40,000 and 160,000 cases could occur in London, due to sub-optimal uptake of the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Vaccination

Increasing uptake of the MMR vaccine to meet the WHO target of 95% coverage with two doses of MMR by age 5 years is essential to maintain measles elimination status for the UK and prevent measles outbreaks from occurring. The [NHS Vaccination Strategy](#) sets out how the NHS aims to achieve this target.

Measles

Measles is highly infectious and can lead to serious health complications, particularly in immunosuppressed individuals and young infants. It is also more severe in pregnancy, and increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or preterm delivery. [NHS Guidance](#) and [UKHSA guidelines](#) include information on typical clinical features of measles infection and common differential diagnoses for rash illnesses.

Implications for Healthcare professionals

1. Notification

- Please notify all suspected measles cases promptly to UKHSA to facilitate timely public health actions. To notify UKHSA, please complete the London specific notification form which can be found [here](#) and return by email to phe.london.region@nhs.net. Please include relevant clinical details such as clinical presentation, date of onset of rash, MMR vaccination status, and any known contact with confirmed or suspected measles cases.
- Please routinely check and inform UKHSA if there has been any contact with individuals who are immunosuppressed, pregnant or infants aged under 1 year whilst the case was infectious. The infectious period for measles is from 4 full days before the onset of rash until completion of 4 full days after rash onset. During this period of increased activity, UKHSA will prioritise health protection actions for contacts in these three priority groups who may require post-exposure immunoglobulin.

2. Isolation

- All suspected measles cases (a rash and a fever) should be isolated immediately on arrival to protect other patients. Measles exposures in health care settings pose a significant risk of transmission of infection.
- If suspected cases have not been isolated on arrival, the GP surgery will be expected to identify vulnerable patients who have been exposed and clinically assess the risk to each patient based on their vaccine history and any underlying condition or treatment. UKHSA will support these assessments and advise on post-exposure measures.
- NHS England Infection Prevention and Control advice may be found at: [NHS England » Guidance for risk assessment and infection prevention and control measures for measles in healthcare settings](#).

3. Healthcare workers

- All healthcare workers (and receptionists / staff who have direct contact with patients) should have satisfactory evidence of protection against measles to protect both themselves and their patients. Satisfactory evidence of protection includes

documentation of having received two or more doses of a measles containing vaccine and/or a positive measles IgG antibody test.

- Non-immune healthcare workers who are exposed to a confirmed or likely case of measles should be excluded from work from the 5th day after the first exposure to 21 days after the final exposure to protect patients and colleagues. This could mean alternative work arrangements such as working remotely.
- Occupational Health service should have ready access to up-to-date records to support outbreak response.

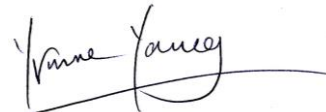
4. **Vaccination.**

- Children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine as per the routine immunisation schedule at 12 months and 3 years and 4 months.
- The second dose of MMR can be routinely given from 18 months of age and in certain London boroughs, where the second dose was brought forward as part of an outbreak response in the past, this practice has continued, with MMR2 routinely given from 18 months of age.
- Where immediate protection is required, for example following exposure, MMR can be given from 6 months of age. Where the vaccine has been given before 12 months of age, immunisation with two further doses of MMR should be given as per the routine schedule.
- There is currently no recommendation to bring forward the offer of MMR1 because the response in children aged under one year is suboptimal. Children under one are protected by ensuring older children in their family and local area are vaccinated, reducing the spread of measles.
- Patients over the age of 3 years and 4 months who do not have two recorded doses of MMR vaccine should be caught up opportunistically. There is no upper age limit to offering MMR vaccine. Unvaccinated post-natal women should be offered any outstanding doses.
- New entrants from abroad and newly registered patients should have their immunisation history checked and missing doses caught up. Advice on the vaccination of individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation status can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



Dr Agatha Nortley-Meshe
Regional Medical Director for Primary Care
NHS England (London Region)



Dr Yvonne Young
Regional Deputy Director
UKHSA London

Appendix. Measles guidance and resources for health professionals and the public

Guidance and information for health professionals:

1. UKHSA National measles guidance (includes post-exposure prophylaxis guidance): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-measles-guidelines>
2. NHS England Measles guidance for primary, community care, emergency departments and hospital: [NHS England » Measles guidance for primary, community care, emergency departments and hospital](#)
3. NHS England; Measles: frequently asked questions: [NHS England » Measles: frequently asked questions](#)
4. Measles Green Book Chapter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-the-green-book-chapter-21>
5. Immunisation of healthcare and laboratory staff: the green book, chapter 12: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisation-of-healthcare-and-laboratory-staff-the-green-book-chapter-12>
6. [Measles Poster](#) for health professionals: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/measles-guidance-data-and-analysis> (found under clinical management subheading)
7. MMR training slide set for immunisers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/measles-guidance-data-and-analysis#vaccination> (found under slide set subheading)
8. Measles training slide sets for: i) maternity services, ii) primary care and iii) paediatrics and accident and emergency services <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/measles-guidance-data-and-analysis#vaccination> (found under slide set subheading)
9. Viral Rash in pregnancy guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/viral-rash-in-pregnancy>
10. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary – Management of measles: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/measles/>
11. NHS Infection Prevention and Control Manual: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/national-infection-prevention-and-control/>
12. NHS England Infection Prevention and Control: [NHS England » Guidance for risk assessment and infection prevention and control measures for measles in healthcare settings](#)
13. Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-and-social-care-act-2008-code-of-practice-on-the-prevention-and-control-of-infections-and-related-guidance>
14. UK Measles and Rubella Elimination Strategy, UKHSA (formerly PHE), published January 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-and-rubella-elimination-uk-strategy>
15. UKHSA Measles guidance on international travel and travel by air: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-public-health-response-to-infectious-cases-travelling-by-air>

16. NICE guidelines on Vaccine Uptake in the General Population:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng218>

Information for the public

1. Complete routine schedule for UK available translated into 23 community languages:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-complete-routine-immunisation-schedule>
2. MMR for all leaflet – routine programme – available in a small range of languages
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-for-all-general-leaflet>
3. Measles: Protect yourself, protect others' leaflet and flyer which is available as a paper leaflet in 22 languages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-dont-let-your-child-catch-it-flyer-for-gps>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/689712/Measles_adults_DL_Leaflet_03_.pdf
4. UKHSA Blog: What do I need to know about the MMR vaccine:
<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/01/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-the-mmr-vaccine/>
5. Measles outbreaks poster and leaflets:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-outbreak>

Guidance and resources for educational settings:

1. Health Protection in children and young people settings including education:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>
2. A [vaccines communications toolkit](#) for universities and other higher education settings is available to download. This toolkit contains information and resources on vaccines including MenACWY and MMR and the diseases they protect against.
3. Briefing pack for secondary schools – adolescent programmes:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adolescent-vaccination-programme-in-secondary-schools/adolescent-vaccination-programme-briefing-for-secondary-schools>
4. Back to or starting nursery, primary or secondary school reminder postcards and posters for parents <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisations-resources-for-schools>