

Protect against measles, mumps and rubella



What are measles, mumps and rubella?

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly infectious diseases that spread easily through coughs and sneezes or close contact with someone who has the infection.

The MMR vaccine protects against these viruses.

The symptoms and complications of measles, mumps and rubella

Measles

Symptoms include a fever, sore red eyes and a rash. Measles can be unpleasant but will usually pass in about 7 to 10 days without causing any further problems.



Complications of measles can include chest and ear infections, fits, diarrhoea, encephalitis (infection of the brain) and brain damage.

Complications are more likely for people with weakened immune systems, pregnant women and babies under 1 year old.

Mumps

Symptoms usually last around 2 weeks and can include headache and fever, but the most common symptom is swelling of the glands at the side of the face.

Complications of mumps can be very painful and can include inflammation of the ovaries or testicles and, in rarer cases, the pancreas. Mumps can also cause viral meningitis and encephalitis (infection of the brain).

Rubella

Symptoms include a rash, cold-like symptoms and aching joints. For most people, it's usually a mild condition that gets better in 7 to 10 days without treatment.

Complications of rubella are rare but if a woman catches rubella during pregnancy, there can be devastating consequences for the unborn baby. The baby could be born with cataracts (eye problems), deafness, heart problems or brain damage.

The MMR vaccine

The MMR vaccine is the safest and most effective way to protect yourself against measles, mumps and rubella. Since the vaccine was introduced in 1988, these diseases have become rare in the UK. However, outbreaks of disease, especially measles, have happened when the number of people getting the vaccine has dropped.


Two doses of the MMR vaccine gives long-lasting protection.

Who is eligible for the MMR vaccine?

Everyone living in Scotland is eligible for the MMR vaccine. If you've not had two doses of the MMR vaccine, you're at risk of catching the diseases the vaccine protects against.

How does the vaccine work?

The MMR vaccine is given as an injection. It is a live vaccine, which means it contains a weakened form of the viruses. These have been weakened enough to produce immunity without causing disease.

 For more information about the vaccine ingredients, and links to the patient information leaflets, visit www.nhsinform.scot/mmr

Over 99% of those who have two doses of the MMR vaccine will be protected against measles and rubella.

Is the vaccine safe?

Before vaccines can be used, they have to be thoroughly tested for safety. Many studies have taken place to look at the safety and effectiveness of the MMR vaccine. There is no evidence of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

In the UK, millions of doses of the MMR vaccine have been given since it was introduced in 1988.

Is there anyone who should not have the vaccine?

You should not have the MMR vaccine if you:

- have a weakened immune system (are immunosuppressed) due to treatment or a disease
- have had a severe reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or any ingredient in the vaccine
- have had a confirmed anaphylactic reaction to neomycin or gelatine
- are pregnant.

On the day of the vaccine

Before having the MMR vaccine, you should tell the vaccinator if you:

- have a weakened immune system (are immunosuppressed) due to treatment for a serious condition, such as a transplant or cancer, or are taking high levels of steroids or medications that significantly affect the immune system
- have a condition that affects the immune system
- have had another live vaccine in the last 4 weeks
- are pregnant, or think you might be pregnant.

If you are ill with a fever on the day of your MMR vaccine, delay the appointment until you are better.

Women should avoid becoming pregnant for 1 month after having the MMR vaccine.

Side effects of the MMR vaccine

There may be side effects after having the vaccine, but these are usually mild.

People can sometimes get a sore arm or thigh where the injection was given. Other side effects could include:

- a mild rash (this rash is not infectious)
- a fever that develops 1 or 2 weeks after the vaccine and lasts 1 to 3 days
- swollen lymph glands that develop 2 to 3 weeks later
- sore or stiff joints that develop 2 to 3 weeks later.

Reporting side effects

You can report suspected side effects through the Yellow Card Scheme at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard, by using the Yellow Card app, or by calling **0800 731 6789**.

For more information about the MMR vaccine, talk to your health professional or visit www.nhsinform.scot/mmr

If you're unsure whether you've had two doses of the MMR vaccine, you can check with your GP or contact your local NHS immunisation team. If you've not had two doses, arrange an appointment as soon as possible. To find your local NHS immunisation team details, visit www.nhsinform.scot/gettingvaccinations