

## Core national script for measles/ the MMR vaccine

### Key points

- Measles cases are on the rise across England. Vaccination is our best defence.
- Measles is more than just a rash – it is a serious condition that spreads very easily and can lead to severe illness and even death.
- While most children have protection through the MMR vaccine, around one in ten in England do not, so are at risk of catching the disease. In some parts of the country, this is as high as four in ten children.
- The MMR vaccine is recommended with the first dose at the age one year of age and a second dose at age three years four months.
- For maximum protection, you need both doses of the MMR vaccine.

### The threat

- Measles in pregnancy can be serious and can cause premature birth, low birth weight and still birth. It is best to be fully vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella before becoming pregnant.
- Measles is very contagious and nine out of ten unvaccinated people can become infected if in a close environment with to an infected person.
- One in five measles cases may require a hospital visit, and one in fifteen measles cases could cause complications such as meningitis, sepsis and blindness.

### Getting protection from the NHS MMR vaccination

- The MMR vaccine is our best protection against measles as well as from mumps and rubella, two other potentially unpleasant illnesses.
- Getting the NHS MMR vaccine is free and usually takes just a few minutes.
- You can book an appointment and catch up on the MMR vaccine at any age.
- If you or your child have missed any MMR vaccinations or are unsure if your child is up to date, contact your GP practice to check.
- For children approaching their MMR vaccination age, your GP practice will be in touch to invite you to book an appointment when they are due.
- Parents and guardians can check their child's red book to see if they are up to date with their MMR vaccinations.

### NHS work to improve uptake

- In 2023, NHS England launched a major national measles awareness drive, particularly supporting communities of lower uptake, including in bigger cities.
- Nationally, the NHS has been sending out invite reminders to parents and guardians with children aged 1-5 years who are missing a first or second MMR vaccination. We sent around two million text, email and letter reminders, which helped encourage more than 165,000 MMR vaccinations (around a 10% increase).

- Building on this success, the NHS is expanding our national invitation and reminder scheme in the next few weeks, by inviting those aged 6 to 11 years old who are missing their first or second MMR vaccination. Over February and March, we will be inviting around 1 million children via their parents and guardians.
- This is being expanded further across the Midlands (Birmingham and Solihull, and Coventry and Warwickshire) and London to include 11- to 25-year-olds, we will be inviting around 1.2 million children and young adults in areas with more cases.
- General practices in England are currently participating in a national vaccination and immunisation MMR catch-up campaign as a requirement of the GP contract. From November 2023 to March 2024, practices are issuing local invitations for those eligible between 12 months and 5 years old.
- MMR reminders were included in flu invite letters for 2- to 3-year-olds in September.
- The NHS has an MMR action plan which includes work to improve data and digital technology and expand access and community engagement alongside targeted communication campaigns to encourage people to come forward.

### **Useful resources to help systems keep promoting the MMR vaccine over coming days and weeks**

- social media cards: [Social Assets - CommsLink - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)
- [series of videos](#) on the NHS YouTube account explaining child vaccinations and including two specific videos about MMR
- signature block: [MMR vaccination email signature \(600 x 175 px\) - CommsLink - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)
- template invitation text: [MMR call/recall - CommsLink - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)
- postcards including Urdu translation: [MMR A6 postcards - CommsLink - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)