

Information for parents and carers about measles outbreak and MMR vaccination

On 1 November a measles [outbreak](#) was declared in Cardiff. Seven children have been confirmed as having measles over the past six weeks, and it is possible that more cases could be identified over the coming weeks. Further information about measles can be found on the Public Health Wales [website](#).

Complications due to measles infection is common, with 1 in 10 children requiring hospitalisation due to severe complications such as pneumonia and meningitis. Sadly for every 1000 cases of measles, there is at least one reported fatality due to the complications of the infection.

Measles is highly infectious, and the only way to prevent outbreaks is through MMR vaccination. The vaccine is safe, quick and effective. Two doses of the vaccine are given, the first at 12 months of age and the second just after three years of age. However, it is never too late to catch up, so if a child has missed their MMR vaccine they can get it from their GP practice.

Children who have had one dose, but are not yet old enough to have received a second dose at just after 3 years old do not need to have this earlier than scheduled. Adults who have never had measles or the MMR vaccine and who are in close contact with children are urged to speak to their GP about vaccination. Here are some frequently asked questions about the MMR vaccine:

- **What does the vaccine contain and is it safe?**
Vaccines contain a number of different ingredients that ensure they can work effectively. Some vaccines contain very small amounts of viruses or bacteria that have been weakened. There is no risk of a healthy person catching any disease from a vaccine. The ingredients are safe and are regulated by the Medicine and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA).
- **Is there gelatine in the MMR vaccine?**
One MMR vaccine used in the UK (MMR VaxPro) contains tiny amounts of porcine (pork) gelatine. An alternative, gelatine free MMR vaccine (Priorix) is available, just ask your GP. More information about vaccines and porcine gelatine can be found [here](#).
- **Can the MMR vaccine cause autism?**
Many studies have shown that there is **no** evidence of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.
- **Does the MMR vaccine cause side effects?**
Like all vaccines, some mild side effects are possible, such as a sore arm or a slight fever, but these should last no more than a couple of days. Give children liquid paracetamol if needed. Note: do not give aspirin to children under 16 years unless prescribed by a doctor.

All parents and carers are encouraged to check if their child is up to date with their MMR vaccine, and if needed, make an appointment with their GP practice.

For further information about all childhood vaccinations, including leaflets and animations about different vaccines, please visit the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board website.

<https://cavuhb.nhs.wales/childhood-immunisations/>

Call the Child Health Team to find out if your child is up to date. 029 2183 2077