**MEASLES AND PROTECTION WITH THE MMR IMMUNISATION**

**Key facts**

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease which can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) In addition, measles infection damages and suppresses the whole immune system. This means that people who have had measles are more likely to catch other infectious diseases. This effect can last for as much as three years. Worldwide, measles is still a major cause of death, especially among children in resource-poor countries.

At the moment most UK measles cases are linked to travel in Europe. Measles cases have also been linked to music festivals and other large public events. [Public Health England is advising people to check that they are vaccinated against measles](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/measles-and-summer-travel-to-europe) before they travel abroad or go to large public events in the UK or elsewhere. Children and young people who have missed the MMR vaccine are particularly at risk.

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, red painful eyes and sensitivity to light, a high temperature, and greyish-white spots in the mouth and throat. A red-brown confluent rash usually appears a few days later, spreading from behind the ears to the rest of the body.

**Why childhood immunisation is important**

Immunisation prepares the body to fight serious infections that might happen in the future. Young babies are very vulnerable to infections, so they need to be protected as early as possible.

Your child needs several different vaccines to be fully protected, so it’s important to complete their childhood immunisation programme.

Some infectious diseases can kill children or cause lasting damage to their health. Your child's immune system needs help to fight those diseases. Immunisation gives protection against some infectious diseases. Vaccines stimulate the body to produce antibodies that fight infection.

**In order to have full protection against measles, mumps and rubella, the preschool booster is essential.**

**Getting your child immunised**

Before your child starts school, they usually get their vaccinations at your doctor's surgery or local health clinic. The Child Health system or the doctor’s surgery usually sends you the invitation to make a vaccination appointment.

Your child can get some vaccinations in school. The school will contact you before they give your child a vaccine.

**If you have any questions, please ask your health visitor, doctor, school nurse or a practice nurse in the doctor's surgery.**