

April 2024

What you need to know about Measles

Measles infection spreads through coughs and sneezes

Measles is a viral infection that spreads easily when people are together, through coughing and sneezing.

Anyone can get measles if they haven't had their Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine or if they haven't had measles before, but it is most common in children.

Measles usually gets better after 7-10 days but it can make some people very unwell.

More people in England are getting measles, so it is important you get protected.

It's good to know the signs of measles and know where to go for help if you or your child gets measles.

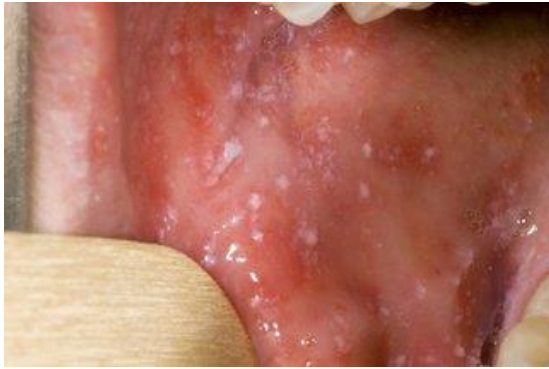
The best protection is to have 2 injections of the MMR vaccine.

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, before a rash after 2-4 days

Most people start feeling ill 10-12 days after getting measles. Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- a cough
- red, sore, watery eyes

You might get small white spots inside your cheek and on the back of the lips after you start to feel ill. These spots usually last a few days.



Most people with measles get a rash 2 to 4 days after the cold-like symptoms started. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears then spreads to the rest of the body.

The spots of the measles rash can sometimes be raised. They may join to form blotchy patches. They are not usually itchy.

The rash looks brown or red on white skin. On brown or black skin it may look purple or darker than the rest of the skin.



To stop measles spreading, stay apart from other people from when you first get cold-like symptoms until 4 days after you get the rash.

People can become seriously unwell with measles

Anyone who gets measles can become unwell. About 1 in 15 people become very unwell.

Measles can lead to serious problems or cause death if it spreads to other parts of the body, such as the lungs or brain.

Problems that can be caused by measles include:

- pneumonia
- meningitis
- blindness
- seizures (fits)

These problems are rare, but some people are more at risk from becoming very ill:

- **Children under 5 years old**
- **Pregnant women** - having measles can cause the loss or early birth of the baby
- **People who have a weak immune system** - as their body finds it hard to fight off infections.

Contact NHS 111 if you think you or your child has measles. Call 999 in an emergency.

Contact NHS 111 or a GP or visit an NHS walk-in centre if you think you or your child has measles.

To use NHS 111, visit <https://111.nhs.uk/> or call 111 free from any landline or mobile phone.

To find your nearest walk-in centre, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Urgent%20Care/LocationSearch/0>

Call 999 or go to A&E in an emergency, if you or your child has measles and:

- **have a fit** (seizure)
- **have severe difficulty breathing** - gasping, choking or not able to get words out (babies may make grunting noises or their stomach may suck under their ribcage)
- **can't stay awake**
- **become confused** - your child may be unsettled, behaving differently, or crying
- **are limp, floppy or not responding normally** – your child's head may fall to the side, backwards or forwards, they may find it hard to lift their head or focus on you
- **have a rash** that does not fade when you press a glass against it
- **have a stiff neck**
- **become sensitive to light**, finding daylight or indoor lights uncomfortable or painful

Before you go to ANY healthcare (GP, walk in centre, A&E) you **must** call them first. This will help them make plans to see you while making sure measles isn't spread to other people.

Get your MMR vaccine through your GP for safe and effective protection against measles

The MMR vaccine is the best way to protect you from measles, as well as mumps and rubella. Lots and lots of people have the vaccine every year – it is safe and effective.

You need two injections of the MMR vaccine for the best protection.

In the UK, children usually get injection 1 when they are 1 year old and injection 2 when they are 3 years old.

The injections can be given at any age, to children and adults. The nurse or doctor will give you an injection in your arm twice in two appointments, usually three months apart.

If you can't remember if you or your child have had both MMR injections, it's best to book an appointment to have the MMR vaccine. There is no health risk if you have an extra dose.

It is easy to get vaccinated - contact your GP surgery to book your first vaccination today.