

**Increase in measles cases – important information for community and faith leaders**

* There is an increasing number of people in the West Midlands, including Solihull with measles. In Solihull most of these are young children who have not had their measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination.
* Measles is a **very infectious** disease which means it can spread quickly among communities, such as schools and nurseries **if** people have **not** had two doses of the MMR vaccine.
* However, measles does not just affect young children – anyone who has missed their MMR vaccination can get measles.
* While most people recover completely within a couple of weeks, measles **can cause very serious illness** – sometimes leading to permanent disability and in rare cases, death.
* People in certain at-risk groups, including babies and small children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity are at **increased risk** of complications if they catch measles.

**Please make sure you and your family have had two doses of the MMR vaccine**

Vaccination with **TWO doses of MMR** is the only way to give people maximum protection. MMR is part of the NHS routine childhood vaccine schedule, and protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

* 1st dose should be given just after the child’s first birthday
* 2nd dose at 3 years 4 months and certainly before children start school full time
* However, **you can have the MMR vaccine at any age**. MMR can be given to older children, teenagers and adults if they missed their injections when they were younger.
* It is safe, effective, and free of charge
* For people who do not touch any pork products, **there is a version of the MMR vaccine, Priorix, which has no pork ingredients**. You can request Priorix from your GP.

**Important information about the MMR vaccine**

In the UK, we have 2 MMR vaccines which work very well. One of them contains gelatine derived from pigs and the other one doesn’t. **If you would prefer to have the vaccine that does not contain gelatine, talk to your practice nurse or GP.**

All those who are allergic to eggs, including children with asthma, can have the MMR vaccine at their GP Surgery.

NB MMRvaxPro vaccine contains gelatine derived from pigs known as porcine gelatine. **Priorix does not contain gelatine**

Anyone who has had a documented anaphylactic reaction to MMR vaccine itself should be assessed by an allergist.

**What to do if anyone in your family is not up to date with their MMR vaccinations**

If anyone in your family is not up to date with their MMR**, contact your GP surgery to arrange vaccination as soon as possible.**

* You can **make an appointment with your GP** to get up to date with MMR vaccines
* This is especially important when measles is spreading in the community – as it is now
* If you are not sure if your child needs an MMR vaccine, you can:
  + Check your child’s Red Book
  + Look at the NHS app
  + contact the GP to check
* People should also make sure they are up to date with their MMR vaccines before going to large gatherings and festivals and abroad on holiday, and before older children start college or university
* In Solihull we have reduced the risk of measles spreading by asking children and adults to not attend nurseries and schools for 21 days, if they have been in contact with someone with measles and have not had **at least one dose of MMR** – because **it can take up to 21 days for measles to develop** after contact with an infected person.

**About measles**

* The **first signs of measles** are:
* high temperature
* runny or blocked nose
* sneezing
* cough
* red, sore, watery eyes
* rash, which usually appears a few days after cold-like symptoms (sometimes it starts around the ears before spreading to the rest of the body)

**What to do if you think your child has measles**

* **Contact your GP by phone** for advice.
* **Please do not just turn up to your GP, walk-in centre, or any other healthcare setting** without calling ahead, as **measles is very infectious** – the doctor will make special arrangements to see your child so that, if they have measles, they won’t pass it to others.
* people **remain infectious** **until at least 4 days after the onset of the rash** – so they should stay off nursery/ school/ university/ work/ other group activities until then

**If someone has been in contact with a person with measles**

* Measles can take **up to 21 days** to develop (incubation period) from being in contact with a case of measles
* Anyone who has had **no doses of the MMR vaccine** and has been **in contact with a person with measles** is strongly urged not to mix outside their own household for **21 days** from contact with someone with measles

**For more information**

* More information on measles is available on the NHS website here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>
* More information on the MMR vaccine is available on the NHS website here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>