

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](#).
- **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 2090 7664 / 029 2090 7661

Childhood Immunisation: Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some commonly asked questions that may be useful to read over before attending your child's vaccination appointments.

Is my child likely to have a fever after being vaccinated?

Some children may be a little unsettled and can develop a slight fever, which should last no longer than 2 days.

- Give them plenty to drink
- Give them liquid paracetamol if needed

NOTE: do not give aspirin to children under 16 unless prescribed by a doctor

Why do children need certain vaccines?

Childhood vaccinations provide protection against many serious diseases, and the schedule is set to provide the best possible protection at the point in time where it will be the most effective.

Why is the UK different to other countries?

Most countries around the world offer the same vaccines for babies, children and adults. The main reason for differences are that some infectious diseases only affect certain countries more than others, and the capacity of health services to deliver new vaccines varies.

If travelling, will children need more vaccinations?

Depending on the country visiting and the activities the child will be involved with, additional vaccinations may be required. Please check with your practice nurse or doctor before making travel plans.

Can MMR cause autism?

Studies have shown NO evidence of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

What do vaccines contain and are they 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 healthy people catching any disease from a vaccine.

The ingredients in a vaccine are safe and are regulated by the Medicine and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Is there any pork gelatine in vaccines?

There are two childhood vaccines used in the UK which contain gelatine: Nasal Flu and MMR (MMRVaxPro). The nasal spray flu vaccine is a fine mist that is sprayed up the nose (no needle) and is the best protection against flu for children aged 2 years and older. If your child is eligible for the flu vaccine but you would prefer your child to have an injectable vaccine instead of the nasal spray, you can ask your GP about this. There are two MMR vaccines available, one contains gelatine (MMRVaxPro) and the other (Priorix) does not. You can request the gelatine free vaccine to be given to your child, just ask your GP.



Is it safe for a child to have multiple vaccines in one day (example at age 2 months, three vaccines are needed)

Yes, it is safe to give children several vaccines at the same time, and this also reduces the number of injections they need.

Is it okay to withhold vaccines until the child is older?

This is not advisable as the immunisation schedule is designed so that your child will be vaccinated at a time when each vaccine will be the most effective.

Babies and young children are the most vulnerable to disease and the longer you wait to vaccinate your child, the greater the possibility of them catching the disease and becoming ill.

Is it safe to have vaccines if child has a runny nose or a cold?

If your child has a cough/cold there is no reason to postpone a vaccination appointment.

If a child is unwell with a fever, then vaccination will usually be postponed until they are better.

Otherwise, it is very rare that a child is unable to be vaccinated.

Please speak to your health visitor, practice nurse or GP if you are concerned about whether your child is able to receive all the vaccines on the immunisation schedule.

Is it safe to have other vaccines just before or after BCG vaccination?

The BCG vaccine is not part of the routine schedule for vaccinations, it is given when a child or adult is thought to have an increased risk of coming into contact with TB.

It is safe to have other vaccines on the same day or after a recent BCG vaccination.

Is the timing of receiving the Rotavirus vaccine important?

It is important that the first dose of Rotarix is given at two months of age, with first infant vaccines. The second dose is then given at least four weeks after the first dose, with second infant vaccines.

Rotavirus doses (first or second) cannot be given after 23 weeks and 6 days of age, so it is important to attend your appointment when received to ensure your child is fully protected.

If I have a fear of needles can someone hold or help with the baby?

Yes, you can ask a nurse or another member of staff to hold your child for you if you wish.

If I have twins to vaccinate can someone help?

Yes, you can ask a nurse or another member of staff to help.

If there is anything you wish to discuss in more detail, please do not hesitate to ask your health professional to talk you through any further questions or concerns you may have.

You can find further information about childhood immunisations on the Health Board's website:

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

Or scan this code with your phone:



This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

