

Measles information for schools and early years settings

City & Hackney Public Health

May 2025

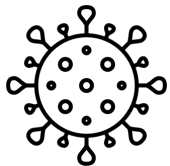
Carolyn Sharpe | Consultant in Public Health | carolyn.sharpe@hackney.gov.uk

CONTENTS

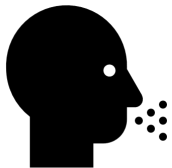
- What is measles?
- Risks & complications
- Interventions to reduce risk
- Action for settings to follow if they have cases / outbreaks
- Additional resources

Measles is a highly contagious, airborne disease caused by a virus that can lead to severe complications

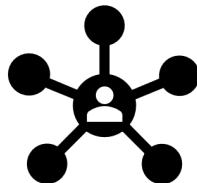
WHAT IS MEASLES?



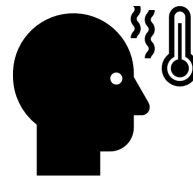
A virus



Spread through
coughing, sneezing,
close contact and
contact with secretions



Spreads very easily
between those
unvaccinated -
especially in schools
and nurseries



High fever
Runny Nose
Cough
Red/watery eyes
Rash (later)

It is hard to recognise measles until the rash appears. By this time the individual has been infectious for 4 days.

HOW TO RECOGNISE MEASLES

Typically those with measles experience the following:

- Measles starts with non-specific, cold-like symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Red, sore, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
 - Runny nose
 - Cough
- After a few days, small white spots may appear inside the mouth
- Later, a rash appears. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears. It then spreads all over the body.



Someone with measles is infectious from 4 days prior to the rash appearing and for 4 days after the rash has appeared (about 9 days in total)



Any unvaccinated individual can become unwell with measles but some population groups are particularly at risk of severe illness

MEASLES IS A SERIOUS ILLNESS

Measles can make some people very unwell

20% - 40% of affected cases can require hospital admission

Common complications include: ear infection, chest infection and, even, pneumonia.

Less common complications include convulsions and swelling of the brain.

Rarely measles can be fatal

Who is most at risk?



Infants (under 1 year)



Pregnant women



Those with immunosuppression (these individuals continue to be vulnerable after vaccination)

Unvaccinated contacts may have to miss work / school

Those who are unvaccinated and exposed to measles may be required to miss up to 3 weeks of school/work.

Vaccination against measles is highly effective - two doses gives 99% lifelong protection

HOW TO PREVENT AND TREAT MEASLES?



PREVENTION

Vaccination is highly effective for preventing measles

- 2 doses give lifelong protection
 - Dose 1 - 1 year,
 - Dose 2 - 3 years, 4 months

Unvaccinated adults and older children can still get their vaccines (although not while pregnant).

Animal-product free / porcine-free vaccines are available on request



CONTROL / POST EXPOSURE

Those that have been exposed to measles can reduce their risk of infection through **vaccination (within 72 hours of exposure)**

Limit your contacts with other people, particularly those that:

- Are pregnant
- Aged under 12 months
- Have a weakened immune system

Those with measles should not go to work or school for 5 days from when the rash first appeared



TREATMENT

Treatment options once infected are limited.



Cases / outbreaks of measles should be reported to and managed in partnership with the UKHSA HPT

ACTION IF YOU HAVE MEASLES IN YOUR SETTING

Contact the UKHSA North East and North Central London Health Protection Team if you have a case / cases of measles in your setting on: 0300 30 30 450 or london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk

- Isolate anyone who is unwell immediately. Infected individuals should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days from when the rash first appeared
- Any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff / pupils should be encouraged to seek advice from their general practitioner or practice nurse. Note they may be required to isolate for up to 21 days.
- Those that have been exposed to measles can reduce their risk of infection through vaccination (within 72 hours of exposure)
- Advise vulnerable individuals that have come into contact with a measles case, including those with a weak immune system, pregnant staff (that are unsure of their immunity i.e. they have not had 2 measles vaccines or previously had measles) and children under 12 months - to seek prompt medical advice.
- Further guidance is available here: [Managing specific infectious diseases: Measles](#)



Useful resources to help promote awareness of measles and the importance of vaccination amongst both staff and families

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Measles: information for schools and healthcare centres - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Measles outbreak resources - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Managing specific infectious diseases: Measles
- MMR Vaccine Summary (NHS)
- MMR information leaflet (www.gov.uk)
- Measles - don't let your child catch it (poster)