

Important Health Information from the Director of Public Health

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Dear Parents and Guardians

Measles update: getting your child vaccinated can prevent them from being sent home from school to **self-isolate**

We are currently seeing an increase in measles circulating in Hertfordshire so now is a good time to check that your child's MMR vaccination, which protects your child against not only measles but also mumps and rubella, is up to date.

Measles is highly contagious and can lead to complications such as ear infections, pneumonia, and inflammation of the brain which require hospitalisation and on rare occasions can lead to long term disability or death.

Spending 15 minutes or more in direct contact with someone infected with measles is enough to catch the infection. People whose immunity is compromised, pregnant women and unvaccinated children are at increased risk of severe disease. Measles symptoms to be aware of include:

- high fever
- sore, red, watery eyes
- coughing
- aching and feeling generally unwell
- a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

Did you know that if your child is identified as a close contact to a measles case and they do not have satisfactory vaccination status they may be asked to self-isolate for up to 21 days? This could mean not attending school or childcare for up to 21 days. Children who are fully vaccinated do not need to be excluded from school or childcare. Vaccination can help keep your child in school.

Anyone with symptoms that could be measles is advised to stay at home and phone their GP or NHS 111 for advice, rather than visiting the surgery or A&E. This is because measles spreads very quickly and easily and so it is important to try and prevent the illness spreading further.

You can check your child is up to date with their MMR vaccinations by looking at their personal health record (Red Book) or by asking your GP. For more information about measles please check here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/> For more information about the MMR vaccination please check here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Yours Sincerely

Geraldine Bruce, Head of Health Protection, Public Health
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