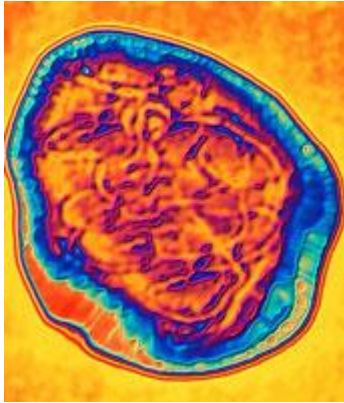


# Measles outbreak: what to do

**A measles outbreak in Wales is a reminder of the importance of MMR vaccination. It's never too late to get your children (or yourself) vaccinated against this dangerous illness.**



If your children haven't yet had the MMR vaccination, don't delay. There have been over 800 confirmed cases of measles in Swansea and the outbreak shows no sign of slowing down.

## Why is it so important to be vaccinated against measles?

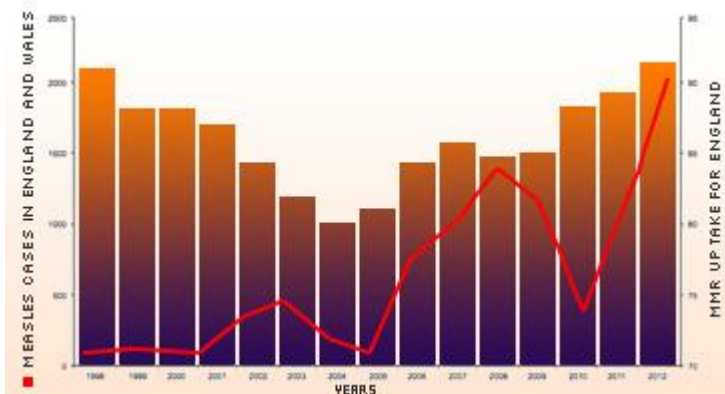
Measles isn't trivial. It's a very infectious, nasty illness which, in rare cases, can be fatal. About one in five children with measles experiences complications such as ear infections, diarrhoea and vomiting, [pneumonia](#), [meningitis](#), and eye disorders. One in 10 children with measles ends up in hospital. There is no treatment for measles. Vaccination is the only way of preventing it.

Read more about [measles](#) and the [MMR vaccination](#).

## Can adults catch measles?

Yes, and adults are likely to be more ill than children and for longer. Someone with measles generally has to spend five days in bed and be off work for 10 days. Adults are also more prone to [measles complications](#) than children.

## Measles cases in England and Wales and MMR uptake rate in England 1998-2012



## **We live a long way from Wales, so should I be worried?**

Outbreaks of measles can happen anywhere at anytime, so wherever you live in the UK it's important that your children are up-to-date with their MMR and other childhood vaccinations. If your child has already had two doses of MMR vaccine, you don't need to worry. However, if they've only had one dose, or have not been vaccinated at all, they really should be vaccinated as soon as possible.

Find out which [vaccinations are available on the NHS](#).

## **What if I'm going close to an area with an outbreak?**

If you have plans to travel to the outbreak areas, make immediate arrangements with your GP for your children to receive the MMR vaccination if they haven't had both doses before. Babies aged six to 12 months can also be vaccinated and children aged up to three can have their second MMR jab a month after the first.

Find out more from [Public Health Wales](#).

## **Can my children still have the MMR vaccination if they weren't vaccinated as babies?**

### **Safety of the MMR jab**

The report that came out in the late 1990s suggesting a link between MMR and autism and bowel disease has since been completely discredited.

There is no evidence that MMR can make a child chronically ill. It is a very safe and effective vaccination.

Read more about [MMR side effects](#).

Yes, it's never too late for your children (or yourself) to 'catch up' with MMR vaccination if they missed it earlier. Children up to the age of 18 and adults without immunity should have a catch-up MMR vaccination.

## **I'm not sure if my kids are already vaccinated. How do I find out?**

MMR vaccination is usually given as a first dose around the age of 13 months and then again as a 'booster' jab before school at age three to five. If your child has already had the vaccine it should be recorded in their medical notes and in their personal health record (the 'Red Book'). Ask your GP or practice manager if you're not sure.

[Find your local GP](#).

## **What do I do if my GP isn't sure if my family has been vaccinated?**

If you or your GP are unsure whether your children have been vaccinated against measles before, then go ahead and arrange to have your kids vaccinated again. It won't hurt them to have the MMR vaccination a second or third time.

## **Will I have to pay for the MMR vaccination?**

No, MMR vaccination is available to adults and children free on the NHS.

## **Can you still get measles after the MMR vaccination?**

It's extremely unlikely, but you need two doses of MMR to be fully protected. The first dose of the MMR jab gives 90% protection and the second dose tops this up to 99% protection. Almost all of the children in Wales who have caught measles were either completely unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated.

## **How do I arrange vaccination?**

Simply call your local GP practice and make an appointment for an MMR jab. It involves two doses which can be given just a month apart to protect as quickly as possible. If you aren't registered with a GP, find the nearest doctor's surgery who will give your family the jabs.

[Find a local GP.](#)

Read more about how the [MMR jab is given](#).

## **Can adults have the MMR jab?**

It's not just children who can benefit from MMR vaccination. Adults who are unsure whether they've had measles or been vaccinated, particularly if they're carers or work with children, can have the MMR vaccine on the NHS from their GP. Bear in mind that most adults born before 1970 are likely to be immune because they have probably been exposed to measles already.