

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Measles?**

Measles is an infection that spreads very easily. It's unpleasant and can sometimes have serious complications. Having the [measles, mumps and rubella \(MMR\) vaccine](#) is the best way to prevent it.

Anyone can become infected if they haven't been vaccinated or they have not had measles before. It is most common in young children and usually clears in around 7 to 10 days.

The first symptoms of measles develop around 10 days after becoming infected. These can include:

- cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, sneezing, and a cough
- sore, red eyes that may be sensitive to light
- watery eyes
- swollen eyes
- a high temperature (fever), which may reach around 40°C (104°F)
- small greyish-white spots in the mouth
- aches and pains
- loss of appetite
- tiredness, irritability and a general lack of energy

The measles rash appears around 2 to 4 days after the initial symptoms and normally fades after about a week.

The rash:

- is made up of small red-brown, flat or slightly raised spots that may join together into larger blotchy patches
- usually first appears on the head or neck, before spreading outwards to the rest of the body
- is slightly itchy for some people

### **Why should I have the MMR vaccine?**

The MMR vaccine helps to protect people against measles, mumps and rubella. It is sometimes also offered to adults who missed their childhood immunisations.

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly infectious diseases and can cause serious medical complications.

Most people in Scotland have had the MMR vaccine. This means there has been a significant reduction in the number of people catching these diseases.

[Learn more about measles](#)

[Learn more about mumps](#)

[Learn more about rubella](#)

**About the vaccine.**

The MMR vaccine is given in 2 doses and helps protect against measles, mumps and rubella.

The [MMRVAXPRO](#) and [Priorix](#) vaccines are used in Scotland. MMRVAXPRO and Priorix are combined MMR vaccines. This means the person is protected from measles, mumps and rubella as quickly and safely as possible. Measles vaccination is not available separately.

**Vaccine safety.**

All medicines, including vaccines, are tested for safety and effectiveness before they are allowed to be used and are monitored by the Medicines and Health care products Regulatory Agency.

**How is the vaccine given?**

Vaccinations are given as an injection in the upper arm.

After having the vaccine there may be side effects, but these are usually mild. Vaccines protect against the risk of serious infections and should not be delayed.

Side effects of the MMR vaccine may be:

- a mild rash (this rash is not infectious and will not make you unwell)
- a fever that develops within 24hrs after the vaccination and lasts 1 to 3 days
- swollen lymph glands that develop 2 to 3 weeks later
- sore or stiff joints that can last from a couple of days to a few weeks

These side effects usually pass quickly and can be managed by taking paracetamol or ibuprofen. The MMR vaccine very rarely causes serious side effects, but the numbers are insignificant compared to the side effects caused by the infection which in rare cases can lead to pneumonia, meningitis, blindness and loss of hearing.

**My child has a fear of needles, is there another option?**

If the person having the vaccine has a fear of needles, please let the vaccinator giving you your vaccine know. Feeling nervous can be a natural response for some people. Your vaccinator understands this and will help you. The needles used are small and you should only feel a tiny scratch.

## **I might have been vaccinated against measles before the MMR vaccine was available?**

- People born before 1988, may have received the measles vaccine, which was introduced in the UK in 1968.
- People born in the UK before 1970 are likely to have had a measles infection and are less likely to be at risk.
- People born in the UK between 1970 and 1979 may have been vaccinated against measles.

It is recommended anyone not vaccinated should get the MMR vaccine, especially if they are at high risk of exposure.

People are considered to be at high risk of exposure if they are [planning on travelling outside of the UK or are likely to be mixing with lots of new people](#).

People born in the UK between 1980 and 1990 are likely to have been vaccinated against measles. They may have had only one dose of the MMR vaccine. You can check your vaccination records to see if you need one or both doses by calling your GP practice.

### **Am I eligible for the MMR vaccine?**

All babies and children in Scotland are eligible for the MMR vaccine.

They will be offered the MMR vaccine in 2 doses:

- the first between 12 and 13 months
- the second at 3 years 4 months

As part of the [routine immunisations offered at secondary school](#), NHS Scotland will check if young people have had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. If they have not had 2 doses, they will be offered the MMR vaccine at secondary school.

Young people and adults who missed their MMR vaccine may also be eligible, including college or university students or anyone planning a pregnancy. If you did not have 2 doses of the MMR vaccine as a child, you can contact NHS Borders vaccination team to discuss your eligibility.

### **Are adults still eligible for the MMR vaccine?**

Yes. Anyone who has not had 2 doses of MMR vaccine should contact the vaccination team, who will be able to help you.

### **Do I need to have the MMR vaccination to travel overseas?**

Travelling abroad can increase your risk of catching measles, mumps or rubella. If you have any of these diseases you might could pass this on to who might be vulnerable such as babies, young children or pregnant women.

If you have not had the MMR vaccine, we strongly recommend that you have this MMR before you travel, to protect yourself and others.

For more information, please check [Measles, Mumps and Rubella \(MMR\) - Fit for Travel \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk)

**My child is unwell on the day of the appointment, should they still get the vaccination?**

Anyone scheduled for a vaccine appointment, whatever their age, and is too unwell to do normal activities, or have a high temperature, should wait until they are feeling better.

**I can't attend my appointment.**

It is important that you attend your vaccination appointment, but we understand this is not always possible. You can change your appointment by calling the vaccination hub on 01896 809250. Cancelling or changing your appointment in advance means that we can offer your appointment to someone else.

**Is there anything I should bring with me to the appointment?**

If you or a family member are having the vaccine and are taking medication, please bring a list of the medications with you. These will be discussed with the vaccinator.

**Can I bring a friend, family member or carer to my appointment?**

Yes, you can ask someone to come with you to your appointment. Where possible we would suggest limiting this to one person however, we do accommodate for families with children.

**I need an interpreter at my appointment, what should I do?**

If you need a BSL interpreter or a deaf-blind guide at your vaccination appointment, please call 01896 809250 or email [Vaccination.BookingHub@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Vaccination.BookingHub@borders.scot.nhs.uk) as soon as possible.

Telephone interpreting for other languages is available at our clinics (via Big Word / language line), just let one of our admin staff know when you arrive at the clinic.

**I have no transport to get to my appointment?**

If you need transport call Scottish Borders Council on 0300 100 1800. We would suggest that you contact Scottish Borders Council as soon as possible as it might take a little for the Council to plan arrangements for you.

Further information is available from [Measles | NHS inform](#)