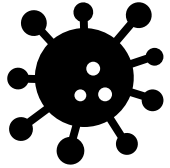


Measles

Contents

- **What is Measles?**
- **How is Measles spread?**
- **Signs, symptoms and common complications of measles infection**
- **Prevention**

Measles



Infectious virus



Particularly dangerous for babies, young children, pregnant women

Symptoms of Measles



rash



fever



loss of appetite



sore, red eyes



cough

- The first symptoms of measles are cold like symptoms - runny nose, cough, red watery eyes and a fever. White spots may appear on the inside of the mouth.
- After 2 to 4 days, this is followed by a rash which spreads from the head down the body. This rash is made up of small red-brown, flat or slightly raised spots that may join together into larger blotchy patches. The rash is not usually itchy.
- People with measles often feel tired and achy. Children with measles can be very miserable.

Why is measles dangerous?

Measles is a viral infection that spreads very easily and can cause severe illness, especially in certain at-risk groups including babies and small children, those who are pregnant and unvaccinated, and people with weakened immunity.



hearing loss

Ear infections: Measles can cause inflammation of the ear, leading to pain and hearing loss.



blindness

Eye infections: Measles is responsible for approximately 60,000 cases of blindness each year globally.



pneumonia

Pneumonia: Measles can cause inflammation of the lungs, leading to coughing, fever, and difficulty breathing.

Meningitis: Inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord, which can cause severe headaches, fever, and vomiting.



encephalitis

Encephalitis: This is a rare but serious condition where the brain is affected, potentially leading to seizures and severe brain damage.



brain damage

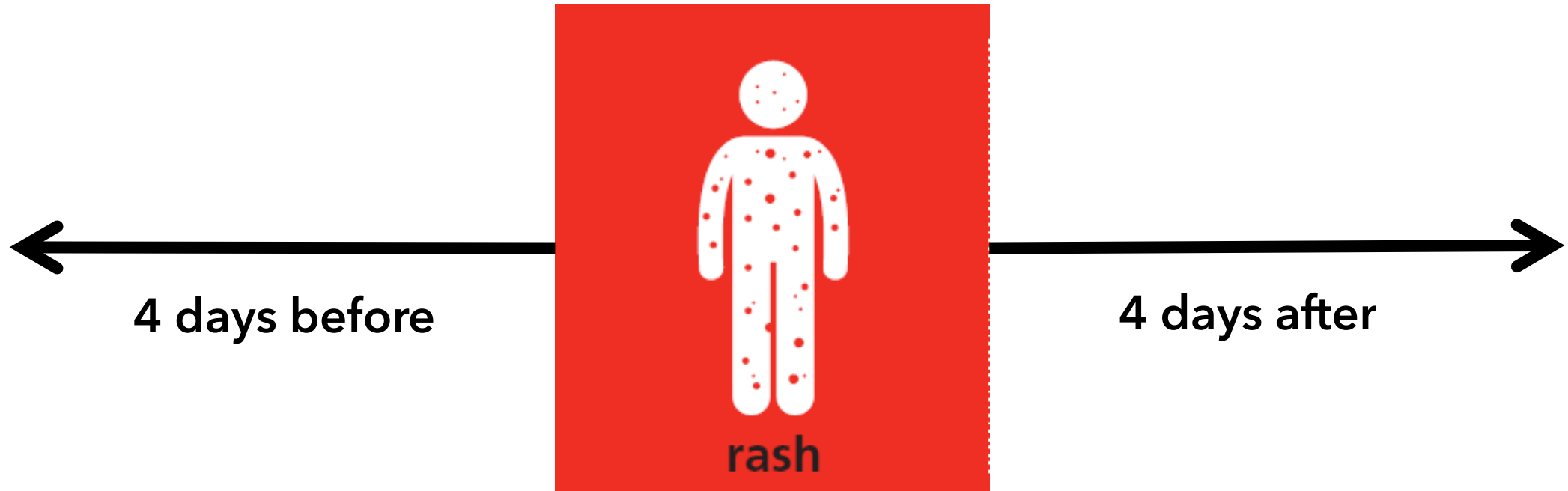
Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis: A rare brain condition that can occur many years after recovery from measles, leading to progressive brain damage.



death

These complications can be life-threatening and require immediate medical attention. It is crucial to ensure that children are vaccinated against measles to prevent these serious health risks.

How is it spread?

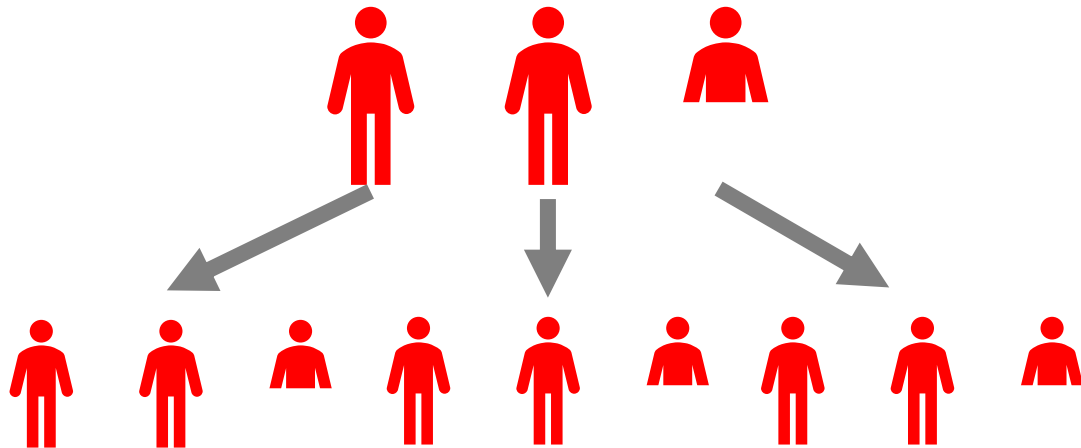
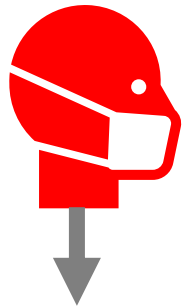


Measles is spread through the air or water droplets, breathed, coughed or sneezed by infected individuals.

People who have measles are infectious from 4 days before rash starts, and for a further 4 full days after.

Measles is very contagious and serious in unvaccinated people

COVID-19



Measles is very contagious and serious in unvaccinated people

Measles can lead to complications, fits, and diarrhoea and dehydration in younger children causing hospitalisation.

In rare cases, severe complications can lead to long term disabilities or even death.

Certain at-risk groups are at increased risk of complications:

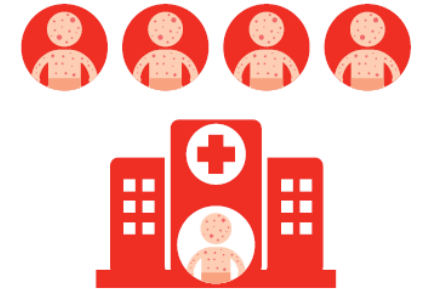
- babies and small children
- those who are pregnant and unvaccinated
- people with weakened immunity

**But measles is a
preventable disease**

1 in 15 children with measles will get one or more complications.



1 in 5 people with measles will be admitted to hospital.



1 in 5,000 people with measles is likely to die.



How do we prevent measles?



- The MMR vaccine is very effective.
- After 2 doses ~99% of people will be protected against measles.
- The vaccine provides lifelong protection.

95% vaccination targets

Latest (provisional) MMR coverage data (UKHSA Jul-Sept'25):

London

MMR1 79.5%

MMR2 69%

Enfield

MMR1 72.6%

MMR2 62.9%

Getting vaccinated also helps protect people who cannot be vaccinated, such as unborn babies, newborn babies, and people with a severely weakened immune system.

The best way to protect those who are vulnerable, is by ensuring the people around them are fully vaccinated with two doses of MMR. This significantly reduces the risk of them passing the virus onto a vulnerable person.

BBC

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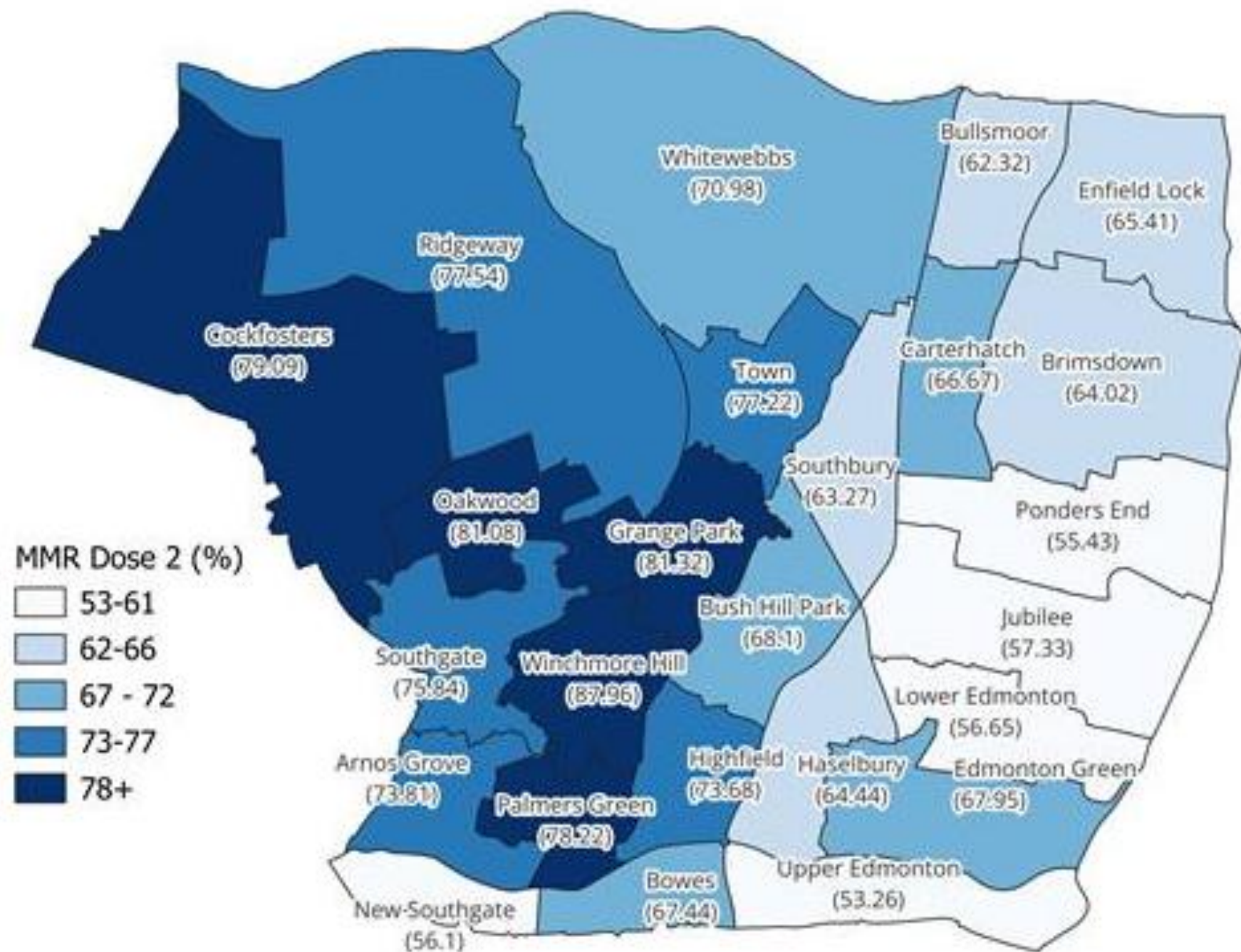
[Health](#)

UK loses measles elimination status

26 January 2026

The UK has lost its measles elimination status, the World Health Organization has announced.

GETTY IMAGES



You can make a difference now – don't wait for a case to happen!

- Review the [Measles information resource pack for education and childcare settings](#)
- Use the [measles factsheet](#) with all parents, guardians, staff etc to:
 - **Raise awareness** about measles
 - **Remind** about MMR
 - Children can get MMR from their GP, OR a local Enfield Vaccination UK catch up clinic (tel 0208 150 7505 / email enfield@vaccinationuk.co.uk / www.schoolvaccination.uk/direct-booking-links)
 - Adults can get MMR from their GP – there is no age limit
- **Identify** people who attend your setting that are in **vulnerable groups** so that they can be quickly identified if they come into contact with a measles case. These are:
 - People who are immunosuppressed
 - Pregnant women who are not fully vaccinated against measles
 - Infants younger than 12 months

Measles factsheet

What measles is

Measles infection is caused by a virus, and spreads between people very easily. Once symptoms start, people can become unwell quickly. You can get measles at any age, but it is often young children who catch it.

How measles spreads

You can catch measles through close contact with someone who has measles. This could be from the air when they cough or sneeze, or by touching things that someone with measles has coughed or sneezed on. Measles spreads very easily in households and in other places where people mix closely together.

You can be protected from catching measles if you have had 2 doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, or if you have had the infection before.

A person with measles can spread the infection in the 4 days before they get the rash until 4 days after they develop their rash.

Symptoms of measles

Symptoms of measles usually start between 10 and 12 days after catching the infection. Sometimes it can take up to 21 days for any symptoms to appear.

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms. The first symptoms of measles include:

- a high temperature
- a runny or blocked nose
- sneezing
- a cough
- red, sore, watery eyes

Small white spots may appear inside the cheeks and on the back of the lips a few days later. These spots usually last a few days.

A rash usually appears 2 to 4 days after the cold-like symptoms started. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body.

The spots of the measles rash can sometimes be raised. They may join to form blotchy patches. They are not usually itchy.

Measles Factsheet

UKHSA Resource Pack for Schools for Measles

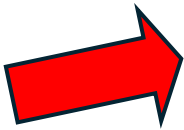
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What to do if there is a case at school?

Follow the **Measles information pack for education and childcare settings**

This pack contains:

- [Actions to take before there is a measles case](#)
- [Actions to take if you are aware of any likely or confirmed cases of measles among people who have attended your setting](#), who have been diagnosed by a doctor or other health care professional.
- [Template letter \(appendix 1\)](#) which can be sent to parents, carers, staff etc if they are contacts of a case
- [A factsheet on measles \(appendix 2\)](#)
- [Further information and resources on measles](#)



North London Health Protection Team
0300 303 0450
london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk

You can find **your local Health Protection Team** here:
<https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

- Exclude the unwell person from school
- Contact local Health Protection Team
- Identify whether the case has had significant contact with vulnerable people (>15mins in same room, or face-to-face)
 - ***Identifying vulnerable people in advance really helps with this part and speeds up the response***

Key actions for you to take if you have a child or staff member with measles in your setting

Contact your local HPT

- Contact your local HPT if you are made aware of **any likely or confirmed cases of measles among people who have attended your setting, who have been diagnosed by a doctor or another healthcare professional.**
- **The HPT may be experiencing high levels of demand, so you should follow this action card rather than waiting to be called back.** The HPT may have to prioritise those settings with young children who are unlikely to be fully vaccinated
- The HPT may advise additional measures and in certain situations, a multi-agency meeting may be set up and the education or childcare setting invited to attend.

Useful resources

- [Catch-up Vaccination clinics](#)
- [Resource Pack for Schools for Measles](#)

Q&A?