

24 Jan 2019

Measles reminder

Ensure all travellers are up to date with measles vaccination

All travellers should ensure they are fully protected against measles, either through a known history of past infection or with a record of two doses of a measles containing vaccine.

Measles is still endemic in many countries/regions around the world including Europe. Large outbreaks continue to be reported and summaries of measles cases and population incidence can be found here:

- [World Health Organization - measles and rubella surveillance data](#)
- [European Centres for Disease Control and Prevention \(ECDC\) - Monthly measles and rubella report](#)

The UK recently achieved WHO measles elimination status. However measles remains a threat to the UK population [1]. A rise in measles cases in England in 2018 has been linked to importations from Europe [2]. Young people and adults aged 15 and over who missed out on the MMR vaccine when they were younger, and some under-vaccinated communities have been particularly affected [2].

As history teaches us, elimination can only be sustained by maintaining and improving coverage of the MMR vaccine in children and by using all opportunities to catch up older children and adults who missed out on the vaccine.

Advice for travellers

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can be very unpleasant and sometimes leads to serious complications.

The MMR vaccine is available to all adults and children who are not up to date with their two doses [3]. Anyone who is not sure if they are protected should check with their GP practice.

Before you travel you should make sure you are up to date with all currently recommended UK vaccines.

In the UK, MMR is usually given to infants at around 12 months of age with a second dose given before school, to ensure best protection. In some cases, MMR can be offered to babies from 6 months of age (e.g. for travel to countries where measles is common, or during an outbreak situation). Ask your health professional for advice on the best option for your children before you travel.

Two doses of MMR in a lifetime are needed for a person to be considered fully protected [4].

Advice for health professionals

Guidance on measles vaccination is available in [Immunisation against infectious disease Chapter](#)

[21](#). Advice on immunisation against measles is also available for those whose [immunisation status is uncertain](#).

In the UK, measles is a [notifiable disease](#). Any case of suspected measles should be notified to the [local Health Protection Team](#).

Resources

- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Surveillance and disease data for measles](#)
- [Measles in brief](#)
- [Public Health England: Measles: guidance, data and analysis](#)
- [Public Health England/ MMR vaccine: who is eligible. Vaccine Update 273. Dec 2017](#)
- [Public Health England: MMR for all, general leaflet](#)
- [WHO - measles and rubella surveillance data](#)

References

1. Durkheim DN, Crowcroft NS, Strebel PM. Measles- the epidemiology of elimination. *Vaccine* 2014; 32: 6880-6883
2. [Public Health England. Measles outbreaks across England. 12 November 2018 \[Accessed 23 January 2019\]](#)
3. [National Health Service. Who should have the MMR vaccine? 10 July 2018. \[Accessed 23 January 2019\]](#)
4. [Public Health England. Measles. Chapter 21. Immunisation against Infectious Disease. Last updated 1 July 2013. \[Accessed 23 January 2019\]](#)