

22 May 2019

Measles reminder

All travellers are advised to be 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:

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

In 2017 the United Kingdom (UK) achieved World Health Organization (WHO) measles elimination status [1]. However, measles remains a threat to the UK population [2]. A rise in measles cases in England in 2018 was linked to importations from Europe [3]. Young people and adults aged 15 and over who missed out on the Mumps Measles Rubella (MMR) vaccine when they were young, and some under-vaccinated communities have been particularly affected [3].

Measles elimination can only be sustained by maintaining and improving coverage of MMR vaccine in children, and by using all opportunities to catch up older children and adults who missed MMR 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 [4]. Anyone who is not sure if they are protected should check with their GP practice.

Before you travel 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 six 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 [5].

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

- [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. [Public Health England. Measles has been eliminated in the UK – so why do we still see cases and outbreaks? 22 January 2019. \[Accessed 22 May 2019\]](#)
2. [Durkheim DN, Crowcroft NS, Strebel PM. Measles- the epidemiology of elimination. Vaccine 2014; 32: 6880-6883. \[Accessed 22 May 2019\].](#)
3. [Public Health England. Measles outbreaks across England. 12 November 2018 \[Accessed 20 May 2019\]](#)
4. [National Health Service. Who should have the MMR vaccine? 10 July 2018. \[Accessed 22 May 2019\]](#)
5. [Public Health England. Measles. Chapter 21. Immunisation against Infectious Disease. Last updated 1 July 2013. \[Accessed 22 May 2019\]](#)