



## Measles – Information for detainees in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) in England

**Measles is currently affecting more people in England than usual. It is very infectious and spreads between people very easily. You can get a measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to **PROTECT** you from catching measles.**

### What is measles?

- measles is an illness that spreads between people easily and is mainly found in children who have not had the MMR vaccine. Adults can also catch measles if they have not had the vaccine, or if they have not had measles before
- measles can make you very ill particularly in babies, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. This is when your body finds it hard to fight off infections and stay healthy
- it begins with a high temperature, a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, a cough, and red, sore, watery eyes
- after a few days a red-brown spotty rash will appear. This starts on the face and behind the ears, before spreading to the rest of the body
- the measles rash may be harder to see on brown or black skin, but the skin may feel rough or bumpy



### How do you catch measles?

- measles spreads very easily from person to person
- you can catch measles if you get close to 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
- a person with measles can pass on the illness in the 4 days before they get the rash. Once a person has the rash, they can still spread the illness for another 4 days

### MMR vaccine

- the MMR vaccine is usually given to children in 2 injections – the first is given when they are 12 months old, and the second is given after they are 3 years and 4 months old
- if you have not had 2 injections of the MMR vaccine, or you are unsure if you have, you can get the vaccine at any age
- this gives you the best long lasting protection against measles, mumps, and rubella. It also means you are less likely to pass it on to partners, children, vulnerable adults, pregnant women or babies too young to have their MMR

### What if you are pregnant?

- you cannot be given the MMR vaccine if you are pregnant; if you think you have been in contact with someone with measles, let the healthcare team know as soon as possible

## Do you need the vaccine?

- if you have not had 2 injections of the MMR vaccine, or you are unsure if you have, you can have the vaccine at any age
- if you were born before 1970 in the UK you are likely to be protected from previous measles infection, but there is no harm in getting vaccinated
- some people do not like needles, but it is important to have your 2 injections of vaccine. It works well for some people to be vaccinated lying down for example. It is a very small needle and is a small sharp scratch. Don't let fear of needles stop you from getting the protection you need

## Where do I get the vaccine?

- speak to your healthcare team who will be able to advise you about measles and whether you should get the vaccine



**Everyone deserves protection from diseases for which there is a vaccine.**

## Side effects of the MMR vaccine

The MMR vaccine is the safest way to protect you against measles, mumps and rubella.

To provide protection, the vaccine copies the 3 infections it protects against, for example:

- some people may get a rash that looks like a mild form of measles around 6 to 10 days after getting the vaccine
- some people may get mild swelling of the face that looks like mumps or mild pains in the joints like rubella, 2 to 3 weeks after vaccination as it starts to work

It's important to remember that the serious illness that measles can cause is much worse than the vaccine.

These side effects occur in a small number of people after the first dose, they only last 2 to 3 days and can not be passed from one person to another.