The London Borough of Haringey
Civic Centre
High Road
Wood Green
London
N22 8LE
PublicHealth@haringey.gov.uk
9th February 2026

Dear Parent / Carer / Guardian,

Re: Increasing measles cases – make sure you and your children are protected

There has been a significant increase in measles cases in Enfield in recent weeks which is now leading to spread into Haringey. Measles is a serious illness which can lead to hospitalisation and death.

If your child (or you as an adult) are not fully vaccinated against measles with 2 doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, then you are at risk of developing measles (unless you have had measles in the past). This letter provides information about what you should do to protect your health and others around you.

What should you do now?

1. Read the information about signs and symptoms of measles
Measles is an infection that spreads very easily. It can occur suddenly, and people can become unwell quickly. At the end of this letter, there is more information about measles – please read this to learn more about the symptoms of measles, how it spreads and about vaccination against measles. There is also further information available about measles at www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles.

2. Check if your children (and you) have had the MMR vaccinations
Look in the child's Red Book or contact your GP practice. If vaccinations are missing, then you can book catchups with your GP.

3. Arrange MMR vaccination if you/your child are not vaccinated (or you're unsure if they've been vaccinated or not)
Vaccination UK are providing community clinics in Haringey and neighbouring areas. **You do not need to be registered with a GP to attend.** If you or your child need to catch up on your vaccinations, then please go to this link and book an appointment: Catch-up clinics. Alternatively call **0208 017 7925** or email: haringey@v-uk.co.uk.

4. Tell your child's nursery or school, if you think your child may have measles

5. Contact your GP or call NHS 111 if you or your child becomes unwell with a high temperature with a cough, runny nose, sore red eyes or rash. You should call your GP before going to the GP practice. This is to avoid spreading measles to others.

If someone is thought to have measles, they should stay away from their education or childcare setting, or work, for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. They should also avoid close contact with infants under 12 months, people who are pregnant and people with weakened immune systems.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Will Maimaris,
Director of Public Health

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.

The rash looks brown or red on white skin. It may be harder to see on brown and black skin.

How serious is measles?

Around 1 in 15 people with measles can become seriously unwell. Younger children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to become seriously unwell.

The more serious complications of measles can include:

- ear infections
- lung infection (pneumonia)
- diarrhoea
- dehydration
- fits (which are less common)

Measles infection during pregnancy can result in the loss or early birth of the baby.

Preventing measles

Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent measles.

The vaccine is usually given to children in two doses. The first dose is given to children aged 12 months old, and the second dose is given after they are 3 years and 4 months old.

If your child is identified as a close contact of someone with measles, sometimes your doctor may recommend the MMR vaccine is given earlier than these scheduled doses. If a dose if given to an infant aged under 12 months then the usual 2 doses of MMR still need to be given at the usual times (with a minimum of 1 month gap between any doses).

If someone has missed a dose or are unsure if they have had any vaccinations, the vaccine can be given at any age. Parents and guardians can check their child's red book for their vaccination records.

Pregnant women or people with weakened immune systems should not have the vaccine. If they think they have had contact with someone with measles they should speak to their GP or midwife for further advice.

For more information on MMR vaccinations visit:

http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine

Or scan the QR code:

Staying away from other people if you are unwell with measles

A person with measles can spread the infection in the 4 days before they get the rash. Once a person has the rash, they can still spread the infection for another 4 days.

If you have been told by a healthcare professional that you might have measles, you should stay away from childcare, school or work for at least 4 days from when your rash first appeared. You can return to your normal activities after 4 days if you feel well and you no longer have a temperature.

Treatments for people with measles

Measles usually starts to get better in about a week.

It can help to rest and drink plenty of fluids, such as water, to avoid dehydration.

Measles can sometimes cause other illnesses. You may be given antibiotics to treat them.

If you have been told by a healthcare professional that you might have measles and think that you or your child are developing more serious health effects, you should contact your GP.

Further information on measles is available at:

http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles

Or scan the QR code:

Register with a GP today

Anyone can register with a GP practice

You are entitled to register and receive care from a GP practice, regardless of your circumstances.

By registering, you can make sure that you and your child can get the right care, at the right time – from vaccinations and check-ups to everyday health concerns.

You do not need:

- Proof of address
- Proof of immigration status
- Identification (ID)
- An NHS number

How to register:

Simply contact your local GP practice:

Visit the practice and ask the reception team for help to register

Or find out more at **nhs.uk/register**