

FOA: Parents & Carers

July 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Measles

Cases of measles is spreading in the Merseyside area. Please read this information on how to protect you and your family.

How serious is measles?

Measles is a serious illness which affects both children and adults. Most people who catch measles become very unwell, and some may be admitted to hospital. Some people including babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are at increased risk of complications. In rare cases, people infected with measles will die.

Measles is highly infectious, and spreads very easily among people who are unvaccinated. A child or adult who has measles will infect nearly all of the unprotected children with whom they come into contact.

The MMR vaccine can prevent measles, and also protects against mumps and rubella. The number of children vaccinated in Sefton is below the recommended levels, with some areas having very low uptake. This means that many children in every school are likely to be at risk from measles.

What are the symptoms of measles? What do I need to look out for?

Measles usually starts with runny nose, sneezing and coughing, and a high temperature. People may have conjunctivitis or red, sore eyes.

The measles rash usually appears a few days later. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body. The rash looks like red-brown spots which may join together to form blotchy patches. People of any age can catch measles if they have not been vaccinated.

If you or your child has a rash which could be measles, they must not attend school, and you must contact your GP as soon as possible or call 111.

It is important to phone ahead, and not just turn up at a GP practice, A&E or walk in centre, so arrangements can be made for the patient to wait separately from others.

People with measles are infectious for four days before the rash appears, and for four days afterwards. People with measles must stay at home during this period and not go to school or work.

How can I protect my child against measles?

Vaccination is the best way to protect children and adults from measles. MMR vaccination has been proven to be safe, with millions of doses given in the UK. It is important that children receive two doses of MMR vaccine to ensure that they are protected.

Children and adults of any age can contact their GP to have a free MMR vaccination.

The vaccination is also available on the Living Well Bus with no appointment necessary at the following locations.

Wednesday 2nd July - 10.30am - 4pm - Waitrose Formby Three Tuns Ln, Formby, L37 4AJ

Monday 7th July - 10.30am - 4pm - Lidl Seaforth Wellington Road, Seaforth, L21 6PD

Friday 18th July - 10.30am - 4pm - Netherton Activity Centre Glovers Ln, Netherton, L30 3TL

Other future dates will be advertised at www.sefton.gov.uk/mysefton-news/latest-news/living-well-bus-back-in-sefton/

If you have further questions about MMR, the nurse will be happy to answer these at your appointment before your child has the vaccine. If you are unsure whether your child has had their MMR vaccinations, please check your child's red book, or contact your GP.

Other things which can help to reduce the risk of spreading or catching measles includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and warm water
- Using tissues to catch coughs or sneezes, and throwing used tissues in the bin

What will happen if someone at my child's school or nursery catches measles?

If someone at your child's school catches measles, the Headteacher will work closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). You will receive a letter with further information about what is happening.

Where to find out more advice and information

More information about measles is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/. This site also contains a picture of the measles rash.

More information about the MMR vaccine is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-for-all-general-leaflet.

Yours sincerely



Margaret Jones

Director of Public Health