Public Health England

NHS England

York House
18-20 Massetts Road
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13th April 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian

I have been asked by the Director of Education for West Sussex Deborah Myers, to forward the following information in regard to an increase number of cases of measles.

Re: Protecting your child against measles

You may be aware that there has been an increase in the number of measles cases in England with some local outbreaks. There are over 130 cases (confirmed and suspected) and some have been ill enough to need hospitalisation.

This letter is to advise you how to protect your child and others. If your child hasn't had TWO doses of the MMR vaccine, we would advise you to contact your child's GP to book an appointment for the vaccination.

Measles can cause very serious illness

Measles usually causes a runny nose, red eyes, cough, high temperature and rash. It can also cause complications including ear infections, diarrhoea, pneumonia and convulsions. It is more likely to be serious in pregnant women, people whose immunity is not working properly and babies under a year of age. Very serious complications, such as inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) are rare, but can be fatal**.**

Measles spreads very easily

Measles is one of the most infectious diseases known. You can catch measles if you spend 15 minutes with someone who has the disease. The measles virus is spread through the air and in tiny droplets that come out of the nose and mouth of an infected person.

MMR vaccine provides safe and effective protection against measles, mumps and rubella

MMR vaccine has been shown across the world to be a safe and effective way of preventing measles. It can protect your child and others against measles infection and its serious consequences.

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What you can do now

We recommend that you organise for your child to have their MMR vaccine now. You can contact your GP to arrange an appointment or to discuss any queries. Children growing up in the UK usually have the first MMR when they have just turned a year old, and a second MMR aged three years four months. Two doses of MMR are needed to get the best protection from measles. There is no upper age limit for MMR.

By getting your child immunised, you will not only be protecting your child but also those people, especially children, who cannot have MMR because they have illnesses such as leukaemia. They are protected if enough of the population is vaccinated so measles is eliminated.

There is more information on measles on the NHS Choices website.

We do hope you will take this opportunity to ensure your child is fully protected.

Yours sincerely

Ms Polly Kitson
Headteacher