

Dear parents, carers and guardians,

Uptake levels of childhood vaccines offered through the routine NHS vaccination programme in England have been falling over the past decade across all vaccines, including whooping cough, measles, mumps and rubella, polio, meningitis and diphtheria - with England no longer having the levels of population immunity recommended by the World Health Organization that is needed to prevent outbreaks.

Nationally we are seeing an increase in cases of measles and pertussis (whooping cough) and parents or guardians are being urged to have their children vaccinated in accordance with the childhood vaccination schedule.

Health leaders in North Lincolnshire are backing a major new campaign to remind parents and carers of the risk of their children missing out on protection against serious diseases – with an urgent call to action to catch up on missed vaccinations.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) campaign has released a [powerful video advert](#) told from the perspective of children and in their voices.

About measles and the MMR vaccine

Measles is a highly infectious, serious illness that can be very unpleasant. Those most at risk are under ones, the unvaccinated, immuno-compromised or pregnant woman. There is no specific treatment available, so it is important to get vaccinated to avoid serious illness.

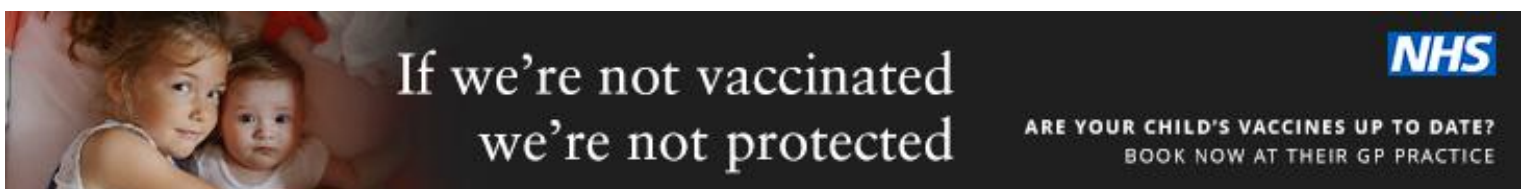
Following the measles outbreaks in London and the West Midlands, the UKHSA are urging parents and guardians of children who are not up to date with their two doses of MMR vaccine to contact their GP practice to book an appointment. If you are unsure of a vaccination status you should consult the red book or contact your GP practice. It's never too late to catch up as the best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine.

The MMR vaccine is the safest and most effective way for parents to protect their children against measles, mumps and rubella. If you and your child have been vaccinated, it's very unlikely you will catch measles.

If anyone in your family is diagnosed with measles it is important they stay home and do not go into work, school or nursery whilst they are likely to be infectious (from 4 days before rash onset and for a further 4 full days). Cases should only return to work, school or nursery when they have fully recovered from measles.

For further information and guidance on measles and the MMR vaccine please see the below websites and the attached leaflet.

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/



Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

On the 7th March 2024 published data showed a continued increase in whooping cough cases with 553 confirmed in England in January, compared with 858 cases for the whole of last year (2023). In response to increasing case numbers, the UKHSA are urging parents to check that their children are vaccinated against whooping cough.

Whooping cough can affect people of all ages but for very young infants, it can be particularly serious. However, vaccinating pregnant women is highly effective in protecting babies from birth until they can receive their own vaccines at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age. Parents can also help protect their children by ensuring they receive their vaccines at the right time or catching up as soon as possible if they have missed any. If you're unsure, please check your child's red book or get in touch with your GP surgery.

If anyone in your family is diagnosed with whooping cough it is important they stay home and do not go into work, school or nursery until 48 hours after starting antibiotics (3 weeks if they do not start antibiotics). This helps to prevent the spread of infection, especially to vulnerable groups. However, vaccination remains the best protection for babies and children.

For further information and guidance on whooping cough please see the below websites and the attached leaflet.

- [Whooping cough - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Information for individuals diagnosed with whooping cough - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Kind regards,

North Lincolnshire Public Health Team

