



One minute guide to...

Summer Wellbeing: Part 2 Travel and Measles

Why is it important to consider the risk of measles when travelling?

Measles is a viral infection which can spread very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. Measles was uncommon in the UK due to the effectiveness of the MMR vaccine programme, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine uptake rates for routine childhood programmes have fallen, meaning less children are protected, and more children vulnerable to this potentially fatal disease in the UK, and abroad. But travelling abroad may increase your risk of catching measles and being unwell during or after your travels.

Measles, mumps, and rubella diseases remain widespread in all parts of the world but are most common in Asia, Africa and South America. Outbreaks occur in Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand where populations are unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. Your risk of exposure may be higher if you visit friends/relatives, mixing with the local population or attending large gatherings during your trip.

How to prevent it?

Having the free, safe, and effective MMR Vaccine via your GP offers the best way to prevent Measles. 2 doses of the MMR vaccine offer lifetime protection against Measles, Mumps and Rubella (German Measles). You should make sure you and your children are up to date with routine vaccinations including MMR before travelling.

Symptoms:

Measles usually begins with cold-like symptoms:

- high temperature
- runny or blocked nose, sneezing, a cough
- red, sore, watery eyes

Small white spots may appear inside the cheeks and on the lips a few days later and may last a few days.

A rash also usually appears a few days after the onset of other symptoms:

- starting on the face and behind the ears, but usually not with an itchy feeling
- spreading to the rest of the body
- the spots of the rash are sometimes raised and join together to form blotchy patches

How to avoid catching Measles?

- Make sure you and your children have had **2 doses of MMR vaccine** to prevent Measles.
- Also: wash hands often with soap and hot water.
- Use tissues when coughing or sneezing & throw away in bin.
- **Do not share cutlery, crockery, towels, bedding, or clothes.**

Who to contact:

An urgent GP appointment should be made for:

- a child or adult who is thought to have measles or anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has measles, who has not had measles before or not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine
- anyone who may be pregnant- measles can be serious in pregnancy
- anyone with a weakened immune system

(GP surgeries may suggest talking to you over the phone. You can also get online advice from [/](#) or by calling

Get help for your symptoms - NHS 111). It is important that the child or adult **does not go to school/nursery for at least 4 days from when the rash started.** Close contact with people who are pregnant or have a weakened immune system should be avoided.

Further Information:

NHS information: [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Vaccination information: [MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Why vaccination is safe and important - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/travel-vaccinations/jabs/>

Guide developed by the Education IPC Public Health & Communities Team in Cumbria

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Working for Cumberland Council and Westmorland & Furness Council