

North East & North Central London



Health Protection Agency

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Parents of children attending schools in London

11th May 2011

Dear Parents and Guardian,

Re: MMR and measles outbreaks

This is to you alert you that France is currently experiencing a large outbreak of measles with over 3000 cases confirmed this year. Outbreaks have also been reported in countries bordering France and in other parts of Europe. http://www.euvac.net/graphics/euvac/pdf/2011_jan_feb.pdf

There has been a much smaller increase in confirmed cases of measles during the past month in the UK. The vast majority of cases have occurred in persons who are unimmunised and most cases are in older children attending secondary school, in students attending university and in adults. Many of these cases have links to cases in France.

There is considerable risk that your child may catch measles if they are not protected against the disease. Unless your child has already received two doses of vaccine, we would advise you to obtain MMR vaccination before travelling to mainland Europe.

Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine

Immunisation with MMR vaccine is the safest way that parents can protect their children against measles, mumps and rubella which are diseases that can have serious consequences for babies, young children and their families. Not all people respond adequately to a single dose of vaccine, so to ensure greater protection, people need to receive two doses of MMR. Two doses of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine offer full protection against the three illnesses, provided the first dose is given from 12 months of age.

In the UK two doses of MMR are usually given, the first at around 12 months and the second around the time of school entry.

- If your child is older than 12 months of age and has never had MMR, please contact your GP to give the first dose as soon as possible.
- If your child has only had a single dose of MMR, please contact your GP to arrange a second dose.

If you require further information then please do not hesitate to contact us at the Health Protection Unit. For further information also go to: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Measles/> and <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Yours faithfully,

Dr Rebecca Cordery

Consultant in Communicable Disease Control.