

Measles

This leaflet offers more information about Measles. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is Measles?

Measles is an illness caused by a virus which usually lasts around 7-10 days. Measles has now become uncommon because most children in the UK are vaccinated against this virus as part of the routine childhood vaccination programme. Measles can cause some rare but serious complications.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The most characteristic symptom of Measles is a red-brown blotchy rash, which usually starts on the head or neck, then spreads down to the rest of the body.

Before the rash appears, children can be unwell with cold-like symptoms like a runny nose, sneezing and a cough. They can also have a high temperature, body aches or painful, red or watery eyes. Some children can have low energy levels or a loss of appetite.

How is Measles spread and how can I prevent Measles?

Measles is spread by breathing in droplets which come out of the nose and mouth of a person who has Measles when they cough/sneeze. You can also catch Measles by touching surfaces on which a person with Measles has coughed or sneezed.

Children with Measles are infectious (can spread the illness) from when they first become unwell until four days after the rash starts. It is important that children stay off nursery or school for at least four days after the rash appears.

Coughing and sneezing into tissues and washing hands afterwards can help reduce the spread of Measles. It is also important to avoid seeing people with higher risk of complications from Measles such as young children, people with a poor immune system and pregnant women.

The best way to stop your child getting Measles is to make sure they have all their childhood vaccinations. These include the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccination which is given at around 13 months and again in a pre-school booster vaccine (aged around 3 years and 4 months).

Does my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

In most cases, Measles is diagnosed by the characteristic appearance of the rash but a throat and/or nose swab will be taken to confirm the diagnosis.

Measles is known as a “notifiable disease” which means it is the law that healthcare professionals tell Public Health England about any confirmed case of Measles. This will involve your child’s details being shared confidentially with Public Health England (PHE) so that they can monitor the number of cases in the community and deal with any outbreaks.

What treatments are available?

Treatments for Measles are to help you keep your child comfortable. Antibiotics are not given for Measles because the illness is caused by a virus and not by bacteria.

Treatments include:

- Giving Calpol or ibuprofen (Nurofen) to bring down a high temperature and help with body aches
- Giving your child plenty of water/fluids to keep them well hydrated
- Giving your child warm drinks or sitting them in a steamy bathroom if they have a cough/cold symptoms.

When should I seek help?

It is important to go to your nearest emergency department or call 999 if your child develops any of the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath or sharp chest pain
- Uncontrolled fever
- Coughing up blood
- Drowsiness or confusion
- Fits.

These may be signs of a more serious infection or a complication of Measles and so it is important your child is checked by a doctor.

Additionally, if you come into close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed Measles, it is very important to speak to a medical professional.

The medical professional will speak to you about your vaccination status, may do a blood test to check your immunity against Measles or may offer you the MMR (Measles) vaccination depending on your history. This is very important if you are pregnant or have been told you have a poor immune

system, because you can be at higher risk of serious complications from Measles.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Emergency Department on 020 8725 2666 and ask to be put through to the Paediatric Emergency Department.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: CYPED_MEA_01_LP **Published:** November 2021 **Review date:** November 2023