

London



Parents of children attending schools in SE London

12 May 2011

Health Protection Agency

South East London
Health Protection Unit

Dear Parents and Guardians

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London
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www.hpa.org.uk

Re: MMR and measles outbreaks

This is to alert you that France is currently experiencing a large outbreak of measles with over 4000 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. However, even if your child has missed the MMR vaccine at these times, it can be still be given safely now.

- 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 a second dose will improve the level of protection.

For further information please go to:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Measles/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Yours faithfully

Dr Rachel Heathcock
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