



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

**Health protection team  
Public Health  
West Northamptonshire Council**  
One Angel Square  
Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

[www.westnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk) | \*insert email here\*

Dear parents and carers,

You may have recently seen information in the news about an increase in cases of Measles which is mainly focused in the London and Leicestershire areas. As these are surrounding areas to West Northants, there is a reason for concern that Measles may spread, which could rapidly cause an increase in infection rates in our area.

### **Signs and symptoms of Measles**

Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash a few days later. Some people may also get small spots in their mouth. Other signs and symptoms of Measles can be found here ([NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)).

Measles is very infectious and can easily be passed to others when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Anyone not fully vaccinated against Measles is at more risk of catching the infection and becoming ill. However, some people, including pregnant women, people with a weakened immune systems and babies are at higher risk of suffering complications if they become infected with the Measles virus.

### **What to do if you suspect Measles**

If you or your child is unwell, and you suspect it might be Measles, please call 111 or contact your GP practice. Your GP may offer a telephone appointment because of the high possibility of passing the infection to others if it is Measles.

You may be asked to do a test to confirm if it is the Measles (and Mumps and Rubella) infection. This is done by gently brushing the teeth and gums with a sponge on a stick (swab). The test is quick and easy to do and is painless even for young children and babies. You will be provided with information of what you should do with the test once it has been done.

If you think your child has Measles please keep them off nursery or school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. It is also advisable to avoid close contact with vulnerable people who could become very ill if they become infected with Measles.

### **How you can prevent Measles**

Whilst the Measles infection is very easily passed on to others it is also very easy to prevent. The best method of protection is the MMR vaccine which gives lifetime immunity from Measles, Mumps and Rubella (also known as German Measles).

The MMR vaccine is usually given at the age of 1 year and a second dose is given just after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday – see the vaccinations you or your child should have and when here: [Immunisation | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk) or to find out more information please visit: [MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

To be fully protected from Measles, the first and second dose of the vaccine must be received, however, in West Northamptonshire, there are still many children and young people who have not received these vaccines.

If you are not sure if your child has had both their MMR vaccinations, you can check in their Red Book, or by contacting your GP surgery. Alternatively, you can access a digital copy of the Red Book here: [eRedbook - The Digital Red Book For Parents](https://www.nhs.uk). You can do the same for yourself or a child over 13 using the NHS app or NHS website ([How to get your medical](https://www.nhs.uk)

[records - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk). If you are not already registered for online services, you will need to create an account.

If your child or you are not up to date with your MMR vaccines, please contact your GP to arrange to receive them. The vaccine is provided under the national programme, won't cost you anything and can be given to anyone who has not received it at the due time.

We urge you to make sure that you and your children receive both doses of the MMR vaccine, as the best way to keep your family protected against the Measles virus.

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SAB'.

Sally Burns

Director of Public Health,  
West Northamptonshire Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Annapurna Sen'.

Dr Annapurna Sen

Public Health Consultant  
West Northamptonshire Council