



**Oifig Náisiúnta Imdhionta**  
Aonaid 8/9 Páirc Gnó Shráid an Mhainéir  
Sráid an Mhainéir  
Baile Átha Cliath 7, D07 X320

**HSE National Immunisation Office**  
Unit 8/9 Manor Street Business Park  
Manor Street  
Dublin 7, D07 X320

[www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)  
[Twitter](#), [Instagram](#),  
[YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#)  
t 01 8676108  
e [immunisation@hse.ie](mailto:immunisation@hse.ie)

By email only

February 2024

**Reference Number: NIO.19.02.24.03**

**Re: Importance of MMR vaccine and being measles aware**

Dear Colleague,

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7<sup>th</sup> February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024.

The HSE is writing to ask for your support in raising awareness among parents, guardians and staff about:

- watching out for the symptoms of measles
- the importance of the MMR vaccine in protecting children

We would appreciate if you would support efforts to prevent the spread of measles by:

1. Sharing information through your channels about the signs of measles with parents (download a copy of the [HSE measles poster](#) and consider displaying in your childcare facility or school )
2. Encouraging parents to visit [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie) for information about the importance of MMR vaccine.

We have drafted a sample letter. Please do share this with parents.

Kind regards,

Dr Lucy Jessop

Consultant in Public Health Medicine –  
National Immunisation Lead  
National Immunisation Office  
MRCN 424447

Dr Abigail Collins

Consultant in Public Health Medicine  
National Clinical Lead Child Health  
Public Health  
MCRN 404629



February 2024

## **Re: Importance of MMR vaccine and being measles aware**

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

In recent months there has been a rise in cases of measles in parts of the UK and Europe. On 7<sup>th</sup> February the HSE reported the death of an adult with confirmed measles. This is the first confirmed measles case notified in Ireland in 2024.

We are asking parents to be measles aware and to make sure your children have received their recommended MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines.

### **Be measles aware**

Measles can be unpleasant and is a potentially serious and highly infectious disease.

The symptoms of measles include:

- high fever
- cough
- runny nose
- rash, which usually appears on head and neck first and spreads to rest of body

Serious complications of measles include pneumonia and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). One in five infected may need to go to hospital and it can be fatal.

More information about measles symptoms is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/measles/> or by searching 'HSE measles'.

If your child develops measles, please inform your early learning and childcare facility immediately.

### **MMR vaccine**

MMR vaccination is the best way to protect against measles.

Uptake of both doses of the MMR vaccine has been below 90% for some time. This is of great concern because measles can be serious and highly infectious.



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## Vaccine schedule

Children are offered 2 doses of the MMR vaccine.

The first dose is given by GP practices when children are 12 months of age.

The second dose is given by HSE school vaccination teams when children are in junior infants. (In Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal, this vaccine is delivered by GP practices).

## Junior infants

If your child also attends junior infants, please take the opportunity to get them vaccinated with their 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine. HSE school teams are still visiting schools to offer the vaccine. If your child missed the vaccine when the teams visited your school this year, you can contact the HSE school team to arrange an appointment to get the vaccine.

## What if I have missed an MMR vaccine for my child?

It is not too late to be vaccinated. The MMR vaccine is available as a catch-up vaccine through GP practices for anyone who may have missed their first or second dose.

## More information

More information about the MMR vaccine is available from [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

Kind regards,

Dr Lucy Jessop

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