

# Answering your questions about the MMR vaccine

We asked a team of healthcare professionals to answer questions from local parents and carers

Updated December 2023

## MMR (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) vaccine explained:

The MMR vaccine is given as two doses of a single injection (in the upper arm or thigh):

- The first dose at 1 year
- The second dose at 3 years 4 months (before your child starts school)

The MMR vaccine is **safe**, it's called a 'live vaccine' because it uses a small amount of weakened virus to teach the immune system how to fight Mumps, Measles and Rubella (also known as German Measles)

The NHS webpage on the MMR vaccine has lots of in-depth information (including ingredients):

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/)

## Why is the first dose given at 12 months, can it be delayed?

Babies are born with antibodies from their mothers, which are almost gone after 12 months. The antibodies make the MMR vaccine less effective. Giving the vaccine at 12 months is the ideal time, the vaccine will work well and your child will be protected as soon as possible

We are seeing outbreaks of Measles in London, meaning it is more important than ever to keep your child up to date with vaccinations. Measles spreads very quickly and can be fatal

## Why is the MMR not given as three separate vaccines?

The MMR vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect your child. Combined vaccines won't overwhelm your child's immune system, in fact your child will only use a tiny bit of their immune system to respond to the vaccines

Combined vaccines mean fewer injections for your baby/child. Having individual vaccines would leave your child at risk from catching Mumps, Measles or Rubella between appointments

## Are there any side effects from the vaccine?

Your child might get some mild side effects from the MMR vaccine e.g. it might be sore where they had the injection. Any redness, pain or swelling should be gone in 2 to 3 days

About 7 to 12 days after the vaccine your child might have flu-like symptoms or develop a rash. Three or four weeks after the vaccine some children get swollen glands in their neck. Like the rash this should go away on its own after 2 to 3 days

Find out more from the NHS [vaccination tips for parents](#)

## Is there a cut off age for the MMR vaccine?

It's never too late to catch up with the MMR vaccine. If you are not sure if they have had both doses you can check with your GP.

## Is there a link between the MMR vaccine and autism?

No, there is no link between MMR and autism. MMR does not cause or increase the risk of your child developing autism. This has been shown in studies of hundreds of thousands of children. The Oxford Vaccine Group website, from Oxford University, has in depth information on these studies: [MMR Vaccine \(Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine\) | Vaccine Knowledge \(ox.ac.uk\)](#).

## Will my GP have the gelatine free MMR vaccine?

There are 2 brands of MMR vaccine in the UK, Priorix and MMRVaxPro. The Priorix MMR vaccine does not contain gelatine. This is easy to get, but your GP surgery might need to order it in. Let your GP know that you want the gelatine free vaccine before your child's appointment.

# NHS vaccination schedule

Contact your GP if your child has missed a vaccine. If you are not sure, your GP can let you know if they are up to date.

Find out more about [NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

## Babies under 1 year old

Age	Vaccines
8 weeks	<a href="#">6-in-1 vaccine</a> <a href="#">Rotavirus vaccine</a> <a href="#">MenB vaccine</a>
12 weeks	6-in-1 vaccine (2nd dose) <a href="#">Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine</a> Rotavirus vaccine (2nd dose)
16 weeks	6-in-1 vaccine (3rd dose) MenB vaccine (2nd dose)

## Children aged 1 to 15

Age	Vaccines
1 year	<a href="#">Hib/MenC vaccine</a> (1st dose) <b>MMR vaccine (1st dose)</b> Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine (2nd dose) MenB vaccine (3rd dose)
2 to 15 years	<a href="#">Children's flu vaccine</a> (every year until your child finishes secondary school)
3 years and 4 months	<b>MMR vaccine (2nd dose)</b> <a href="#">4-in-1 pre-school booster vaccine</a>
12 to 13 years	<a href="#">HPV vaccine</a>
14 years	<a href="#">3-in-1 teenage booster vaccine</a> <a href="#">MenACWY vaccine</a>