



# HSE National Patient Safety Alert

## Risk of measles in healthcare settings

### (002/2024)

**What does it mean for me as a patient, parent or guardian?**

#### About National Patient Safety Alerts

HSE *National Patient Safety Alerts* (NPSA) are high-priority communications about patient safety issues, which require HSE services and HSE funded agencies to take specific action within an identified timeframe. NPSAs are developed with relevant people including subject matter experts and patient representatives.

#### What is the safety issue?



Measles is a highly contagious viral infection that spreads very easily through coughing and sneezing. Children under one year of age, those who are pregnant and people with poor immunity are affected the worst and 1 in 5 of measles cases will require admission to hospital. It is estimated that almost all people not immune to measles that are exposed to a person with measles will get the disease.

This alert was issued as early recognition of measles and vaccination against the disease are essential in reducing the risk of measles outbreaks in healthcare settings. A measles outbreak in a healthcare facility would have a significant impact on vulnerable patients and staff, staffing levels, isolation facilities and bed availability.

#### What can I do?



**Ensure you and your family are properly vaccinated against measles.** The risk of measles can be reduced by:

- Having the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. The MMR vaccine is a safe and effective combined vaccine. Children should get the MMR injection at 12 months of age and again at 4 to 5 years of age.

People born in Ireland before 1978 are likely to have had a measles infection and are therefore considered immune.

**Contact your GP or maternity hospital urgently if you:**

- are pregnant and you think you might have measles
- think you or your child has measles
- were in close contact with someone who has measles and you are pregnant
- were in close contact with someone who has measles and you did not have measles in the past or 2 doses of the MMR vaccine

*Call before you go to your GP or hospital. They may need to make arrangements to reduce the risk of spreading the infection. ([HSE Measles](#))*

**If you suspect measles:**

- Do not travel or use public transport
- Do not attend childcare, school, college or work
- Contact your employer for advice before attending work.

#### What should I look for?

Measles starts with cold-like symptoms around 10-21 days after you get infected.

The first symptoms of measles are:

- aches and pains, a runny nose, sneezing and a cough
- sore, red eyes that may be sensitive to light
- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above (fever)
- small grey-white spots in your mouth
- loss of appetite
- tiredness, irritability and a general lack of energy

The measles rash can develop a few days later.



#### Where can I get more information?



For more information on measles see <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/measles/>

