

Health protection information for early years and primary school children – April 2024

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1. Measles Update

Measles is circulating across England. Measles can lead to infections, fits, damage to the brain or in severe cases, death. Measles spreads very quickly in educational settings and one person with measles can infect up to 15 other children if they have not been vaccinated.

What to look out for

Symptoms of measles include a high temperature, runny or blocked nose sneezing, a cough, red sore watery eyes, white spots inside the cheeks and on the back of the lips and a rash (that starts on the face and behind the ears before spreading to the rest of the body.)

What to do if you think your child has measles.

- Seek advice immediately from your doctor or 111. Remember to call ahead and to let your doctor know that you suspect measles before visiting the practice.
- Keep your child away from others and keep them off school.
- If your child is severely unwell ring 999 for urgent medical help.

How to protect your child from measles

The only protection from measles is the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination. This is given in 2 doses at 12 months and 3 years 4 months. If you are unsure whether your child is up to date with their MMR vaccination you can check their red book or ring your doctor's surgery who will be able to check. It is never too late to catch up on MMR vaccinations.

For more information on measles visit [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

2. Head lice

Head lice is very common, especially in younger children although anyone can catch them. Head lice are largely harmless but can be difficult to spot and frustrating to get rid of.

If your child has head lice, you will need to treat them to get rid of them. Your pharmacist or doctor will let you know the best way to do this which is usually by the use of a special comb, lotion or spray. Only use treatment that has been given by your pharmacist or doctor.

The below leaflets tell you the signs / symptoms of headlice, how to treat them and where to go for help. Head lice treatments can be provided free of charge from your pharmacy if you do not pay for your prescriptions.

- [English leaflet](#)
- [Headlice-Romanian.pdf \(cpwy.org\)](#)
- [Headlice-Slovak.pdf \(cpwy.org\)](#)

3. The use of antibiotics

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) happens when germs develop the ability to defeat the medication that has been designed to kill them, often these are called 'superbugs.' These infections are harder to treat, and illness may therefore be more severe and last for longer.

It is important to follow these simple steps to help combat antimicrobial resistance.

1. Only use antibiotics when prescribed by a certified health professional.
2. Always take the full prescription, even if you feel better.
3. Never use left over antibiotics.
4. Never share antibiotics with others.
5. Prevent infections by regularly washing your hands, avoiding contact with sick people and keeping your vaccinations up to date.

You can become [Antibiotic Guardian – Pledge to be an Antibiotic Guardian](#). This campaign encourages healthcare organisations, GP practices, hospitals, pharmacies, farmers, patients and the public to pledge towards responsible use of antibiotics.

For more information about antimicrobial resistance see the below video and resources:

- [Antibiotic resistance - why it's important to take action - YouTube](#)
- [Seriously Resistant | Help Us Keep Antibiotics Working](#)
- [Antibiotic resistance \(who.int\)](#)

4. Summer Ready

While many people enjoy warmer weather, heat can cause some people to become unwell through overheating, dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Here are some tips to keeping safe in the heat:

- Keep out of the sun at the hottest times of the day, between 11am and 3pm
- Do physical activity at times when it is cooler, such as the morning or evening.
- Keep indoor spaces cool by closing windows and curtains in rooms that face the sun.
- When outside make sure you cover up with a hat and sunglasses, seek shade and apply sunscreen.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke and what to do if you or someone else has them

For more information visit [NHS page](#).

5. Whooping Cough

Cases of whooping cough (also known as pertussis) are continuing to rise. Whooping cough is an infection that affects the lungs and airways. It starts with symptoms similar to a cold, with a runny

nose and mild fever, and a cough develops about a week later. The cough can be intense, and attacks of coughing can last for several minutes. Often people make a distinctive 'whooping' sound as they gasp for breath during coughs.

The whooping cough vaccination

The pertussis vaccination protects against whooping cough, this is delivered by the NHS free of charge as part of the routine vaccination schedule. The vaccine is offered to:

- Pregnant women ideally between 20-32 weeks of pregnancy (this helps to protect unborn babies in the womb and in their first months of life before they become eligible for their own vaccination). If you are pregnant and have not been vaccinated contact your GP to enquire about the pertussis vaccination
- Babies at 8 weeks, 12 weeks and 16 weeks. Offered as part of the routine 6 in 1 vaccine
- Preschool children. Offered at 3 years 4 months as part of the preschool booster vaccination.
- Check your child is up to date with their pertussis vaccination by checking their 'Red Book' or contacting their GP. Your child's GP will arrange an appointment to catch up on any missed vaccinations.

What to do if you think your child has whooping cough

If you think your child has whooping cough you should:

- Contact your GP or ring 111. Make sure you call ahead before visiting the surgery.
- Call 999 or go to hospital if your child is finding it hard to breathe, has chest pains, turns blue or grey around their lips, tongue, or face or is having seizures (fits).
- Keep them home. They should not attend educational settings until 48 hours after starting antibiotics, or 3 weeks after symptoms started if they have not had antibiotics.

For more information on whooping cough visit [Whooping cough - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)