



By email only

April 2025

**Reference Number: NIO.23.04.25.01**

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

Dear Colleague,

There were over 120,000 cases of measles reported in Europe in 2024. This is double the number of cases reported in 2023 and is the highest number of cases since 1997.

Children aged under 5 years are particularly vulnerable to serious health complications from measles. They account for more than 40% of cases. Cases of measles continue to be reported in Ireland as well.

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 (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine in protecting children

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

1. Sharing information about the signs of measles with parents. You can 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). [This has](#) information about the importance of MMR vaccine and how to get it.

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

Kind regards,



**Oifig Náisiúnta Imdhíonta**

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April 2025

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

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

There were over 120,000 cases of measles reported in Europe in 2024. This is double the number of cases reported in 2023. Cases of measles continue to be reported in Ireland as well.

We are asking parents to:

1. be measles aware – know the symptoms
2. make sure your children have received their recommended MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines. This is offered at 12 months and during junior infants

### **Protect your child - be measles aware**

Measles can be unpleasant. It is a potentially serious and highly infectious disease, especially in young children under 5 years. 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

Measles can cause serious illness, including include pneumonia and swelling of the brain (encephalitis). 1 in 5 people with measles may need to go to hospital and it can cause death.

Find information about measles symptoms

at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/measles/> or search 'HSE measles'.

If your child develops measles, please inform your early learning and childcare facility immediately. Children in your child's group or class may need to get the MMR vaccine.

### **Protect your child – Get the MMR vaccine**

MMR vaccination is the best way to protect your child against measles.

Uptake of both doses of the MMR vaccine has been lower than the HSE target for some time. This is of great concern. Measles can spread easily between people who



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are not vaccinated. It can cause very serious illness.

### **How can I get the MMR vaccine for my child?**

Children are offered 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. 2 doses of the MMR vaccine provide the best protection.

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 given by GP practices).

### **Junior infants**

Your child will be offered the 4 in 1 and MMR vaccine during junior infants. Please take the opportunity to get them vaccinated. These vaccines can be given safely at the same time. HSE school teams are still visiting schools to offer the vaccine.

If your child missed the vaccine when the teams visited your school, you can contact the HSE school team. They will 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 for anyone who may have missed their first or second dose. Contact your GP practice for advice.

### **Where can I get more information?**

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

Kind regards,

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