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[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

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Distribution – Directors of Children’s Services  
East Sussex County Council  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
West Sussex County Council  
Surrey County Council

Dear Colleague

**Re: Measles**

I would be grateful if you could alert all schools to the current increased risk from measles. In the past few weeks we have started to see confirmed measles cases across Surrey and Sussex and this has involved a small number of schools.

In addition, there are outbreaks of measles ongoing in:

- Bulgaria
- France (large outbreak)
- Germany
- Italy

Families planning to travel abroad during the school holidays should check that they are up to date with their MMR vaccinations prior to departure. This is also important for any planned school trips.

It is important to have two doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination. MMR is routinely given in the UK at the age of 13 months and again at 3.5 years. You can catch measles at any age, but it is most common in children, teenagers and young adults who have not been immunised. Measles complications affect 1 in every 15 children and can include eye and ear infections, pneumonia, seizures and rarely encephalitis.

**Symptoms of measles can include:**

- runny nose
- red eyes
- cough
- fever
- small spots with white centres inside the mouth
- rash

People with measles are infectious from five days before the rash appears until four days afterwards.

## **MMR vaccine**

- If you or your child have had two MMR vaccinations, there is no action that you need to take.
- If you or your child are well and have not been vaccinated, or have only received one MMR vaccination, please make an appointment with the Practice Nurse at your local GP surgery.
- People born before 1970 who think that they have had measles infection in the past are likely to be immune.

Two doses of vaccine can be given one month apart over the age of 18 months. MMR vaccine does not contain thiomersal or any other preservatives.

## **Special circumstances**

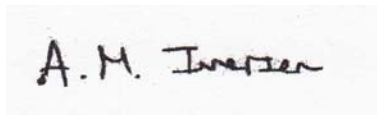
- Pregnant women should not have MMR as it is a live vaccine. Babies aged up to six months, pregnant women and adults with compromised immune systems may be offered immunoglobulin to reduce the severity of measles if they have been in contact with a case.

## **Further information is available from:**

- NHS Direct - 0845 4647
- NHS Choices - <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/MMR/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- Department of Health – MMR facts leaflet (attached)

Measles is a serious disease, please check that you and your children are fully immunised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. M. Iversen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Dr Angela Iversen  
Director Surrey & Sussex Health Protection Unit  
GMC No: 2461708