



## Kensington Group Practice

DONEGALL ROAD AND FINAGHY  
Medical Centre

# *Spring Newsletter*

15TH MARCH 2024

**Please note we will be closed for St Patrick's Day on Monday 18th March 2024, and Easter on Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd April 2024. Other upcoming bank holidays when we will be closed are Monday 6th May, and Monday 27th May 2024.**

**If you have an urgent problem that cannot wait until we reopen at 8.30am the following day, you can contact GP Out of hours.**

**The GP Out Of Hours Service provides care for people in Belfast when their normal GP surgery is closed. It is not intended to replace normal GP services, but deals with urgent problems that cannot wait until your own GP is available. You should therefore only use this service if you are suddenly ill and you cannot wait until your GP's surgery is open.**

**South and East Belfast - 02890 796220**

**North and West Belfast - 02890 744447**

**Lisburn area - 02892 602204**

**Call 999 in an emergency. Chest pains and/or shortness of breath constitute an emergency.**



# Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) catchup campaign

A number of people have recently had measles in Northern Ireland. In the past, high levels of immunisation uptake have provided protection, but unimmunised people are at risk and can catch and spread measles.

The number of cases of measles is rising across the United Kingdom and Europe, including Northern Ireland.

To be protected you need to be immunised with MMR vaccine.

Remember, it is never too late to get protected against measles, and you'll also be protecting yourself against two other diseases – mumps and rubella – that can be particularly serious in adults.



## Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

The MMR vaccine protects your child against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles). Your child should receive one dose after their first birthday and another when they are aged three years and four months old. Anyone aged one to 25 who hasn't had two doses can get the vaccine now.

- i** If you are aged between 12 months and 25 years old and haven't had two doses of the MMR vaccine, you can get the vaccine now until 31 March. Further information is available at [Northern Ireland MMR catch-up campaign](#).

HSC Public Health Agency



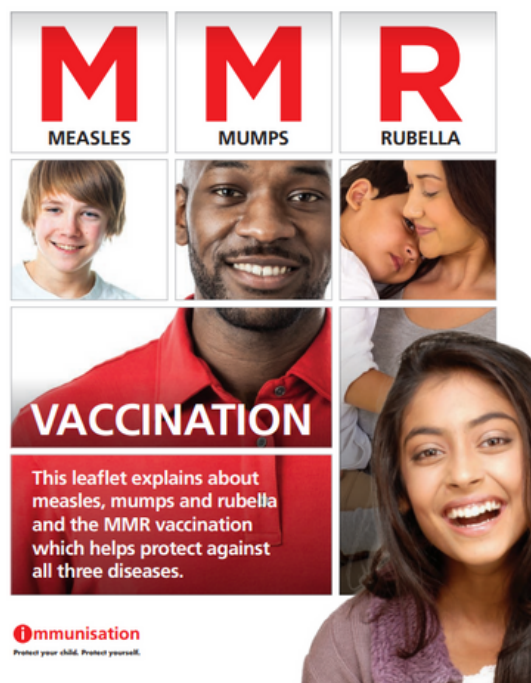
**MEASLES**  
Don't let your child catch it  
- make sure they get the MMR vaccine

The number of young people catching measles has risen across Europe and the UK. Children are offered MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella just after their first birthday and a second dose at 3 years 4 months. For the best protection they need both these doses. It's never too late to be vaccinated. For more information contact your local GP surgery or visit: [pha.site/mmr](#)

If you need to contact an emergency or out of hours service, it is important to phone ahead if you are experiencing any of the signs and symptoms of measles.

**i**mmunisation  
the safest way to protect your child

Public Health Agency, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS. Tel: 0300 555 0114. [www.publichealth.hscni.net](#) [www.nidirect.gov.uk](#)



**M** MEASLES   **M** MUMPS   **R** RUBELLA

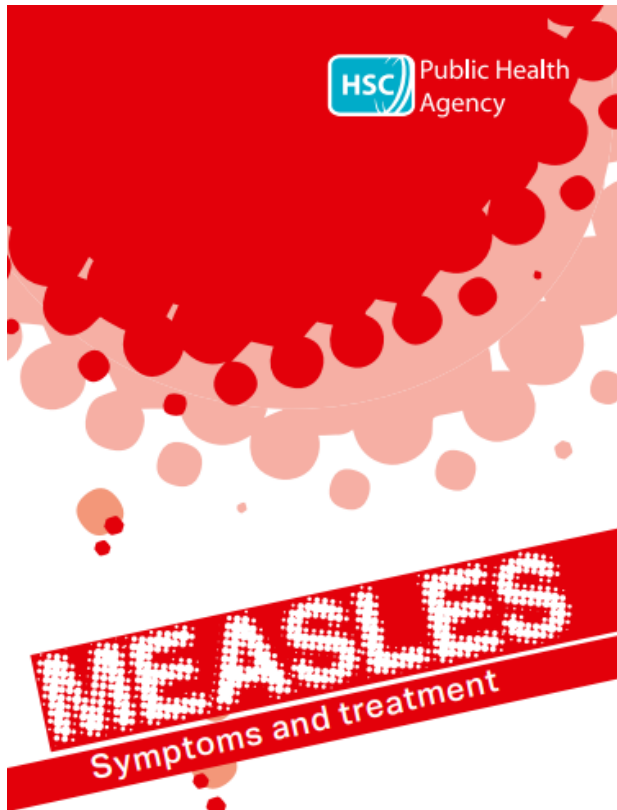
**VACCINATION**

This leaflet explains about measles, mumps and rubella and the MMR vaccination which helps protect against all three diseases.

**i**mmunisation  
Protect your child. Protect yourself.

# What does Measles look like?

Please click on the boxes below - this information is available in several languages



Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can be very unpleasant and sometimes lead to serious complications. The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination is very effective at protecting people from getting measles (as well as mumps and rubella).

Anyone can get measles if they haven't been vaccinated or they haven't had it before, although it's most common in young children.

The infection usually clears in around 7 to 10 days.

## Measles is contagious

If you are thinking of attending any health facility, whether this is your GP, A&E or other facility - it is really important that you let them know that measles is suspected before they attend.

Please DON'T attend the GP surgery without contacting us first, so the necessary arrangements can be made.

If attending the Accident and Emergency department, use their "Phone First" numbers before attending, during office hours, or if this is not available - explain that you suspect Measles on arrival.



If you or your child have not had two doses of the MMR vaccine, you could catch measles.

If you think you have measles, please inform reception staff immediately so you can be seen in a separate room.

This will stop the infection spreading to others.

For more information, see [www.nidirect.gov.uk/mmr](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/mmr)

Measles symptoms include:



# *Pertussis (whooping cough)*

Whooping cough, (pertussis), is a highly contagious bacterial chest infection. It causes repeated coughing bouts and can make babies and young children in particular very ill. In recent years, cases have increased. But it's still rare due to a vaccination programme that can protect babies and children from the condition.

That said, in recent months, the Public Health Agency have become concerned about the rise in the cases of whooping cough.



Please click on the picture to left for information about:

- Symptoms of whooping cough
- Who's at risk of whooping cough
- When to get medical advice
- Treatment for whooping cough
- Stopping the infection spreading
- Vaccinations for whooping cough
- Complications of whooping cough



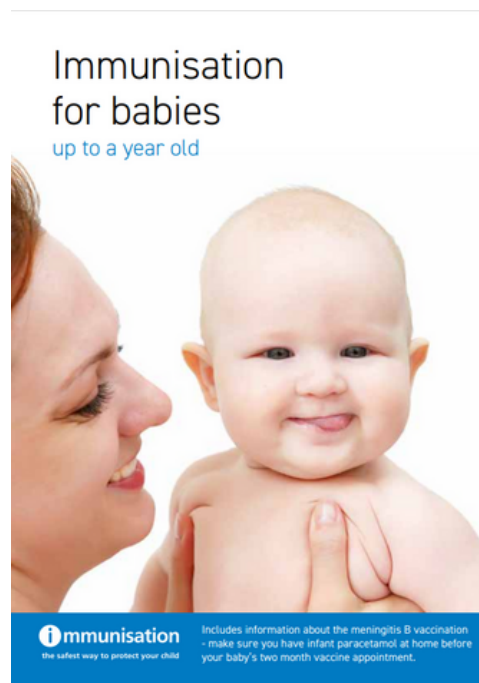
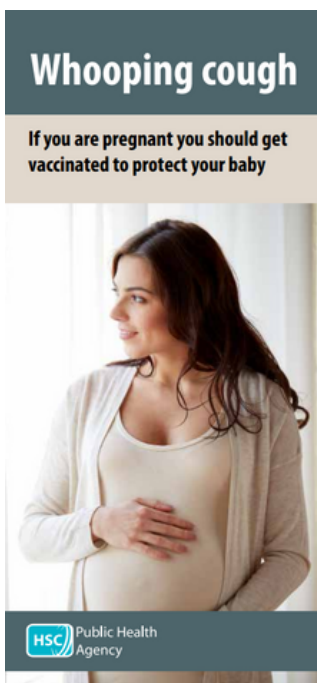
Louise Flanagan, Consultant in Public Health at the PHA, said: "Whooping cough spreads very easily and can make babies and young children in particular very ill, and sadly can even be fatal in young babies or people with health conditions. However, the good news is that it can be prevented through vaccination, so it's really important that parents get their babies vaccinated against it as part of the childhood vaccination programme, and that pregnant women also get vaccinated, as this will help protect their unborn baby from getting whooping cough in the weeks after birth."

# *Vaccination for pertussis*

If you a pregnant lady, after 16 weeks and ideally before 32 weeks, and you have not yet had your “Pertussis in Pregnancy vaccination”, or made arrangements to get it, please book an appointment with our nurse.

If you believe your child may not be up-to-date with their childhood vaccinations, and might not have had their full complement of pertussis vaccinations, please also book an appointment with our nurse to discuss vaccination needs.

Even if vaccinations have been previously declined, these are still available if you wish, and we would encourage consideration of “catch-up” vaccinations where appropriate.



## *Choosing to decline childhood vaccinations?*

If you have concerns about your child receiving their childhood vaccinations, we would always encourage parents to discuss this with the nurse or GP, and to consider the balance of benefits and risks. However if you choose not to vaccinate your child, it's important to understand the risks and responsibilities.

Please have a look at this useful and pragmatic information from the World Health Organization; click on the link below.

<https://kensingtongp.uk/if-declining-childhood-vaccs>

# *Have you nominated a preferred chemist?*

Many of our local pharmacies call into our surgery throughout the week, to collect prescriptions and bring them back to the pharmacy for processing. This is very helpful, as it saves you have to make a “double visit” and also frees up reception time, so they can help patients with other things.

If you have not yet nominated a pharmacy, but would like to, let us know, and any further prescriptions we print for you, will be left out for them to collect.

Please check with your pharmacy that they do indeed call to our surgery (not all do, especially those further away from us), and how often they call.

If you are ever ordering an item that you would prefer to collect yourself (eg. something needed more urgently) please let the team know when ordering, so we won't leave that item out for the pharmacy.

We will always endeavour to prepare your script for you or your pharmacy to collect within 24 hours, but please do also allow time for your pharmacy to collect, and then process your prescription; we'd suggest leaving 72 hours for this, but some pharmacies, especially if they do not call with us every day, may need a little longer.

Please do not phone the surgery to check on the progress on ordered prescriptions (unless perhaps it is an urgently needed item) as this ties up our telephone lines, and takes our administrative team away from other tasks.



# *A word about our Treatment Rooms in Donegall Road and Finaghy*

We would like to share a few general points to help with the smooth running of our treatment rooms, and using our nursing staff's time most effectively.

- If you are dropping off a urine sample for examination/testing, please ensure you do so before 1130am. This is because there may not always be staff available to test it after this time, and it is also to make sure that if we need to send the sample off to the laboratory for further analysis, we don't miss the laboratory delivery driver.
- Please don't book into the Treatment Room for blood tests if there hasn't been a recommendation by one of the medical team as to what actually needs done. It is important for our nursing staff it is clear what blood tests it is they to take. If you believe you need blood tests, please discuss with the GP first so it can be agreed what needs to be done.

## *Have your contact details changed?*

If your contact details have changed, such as your phonenumber, or address, it's really important to let us know. This reduces the possibility of not being able to reach you if we need to contact you about something, or missed post.

You can update your details here:

<https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/change-of-personal-details>

A reminder of our current practice area can be found here; if a new address is outside our practice boundary, you will need to seek registration with a new surgery closer to your new address.

<https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/practice-area>

If you are planning to leave the United Kingdom permanently, please also let us know, so we can close your registration. This is to avoid sending unnecessary invitations, or other contacts. You can always re-register if you return to live within our practice area at some future point.

# *A word about appointments... ... specifically, wasted ones*

**Demand remains very strong for appointments, so it's vital we make the best use out of our clinician time collectively, as it is finite.**

**We are seeing a fairly high number of "*Do not attends*", however.**

**This wastes a considerable amount of appointments, appointments we would far rather have spent addressing the needs of our patients.**

**In February 2024 alone, we lost the benefit of -**

- **115 GP appointments**
- **66 nurse appointments**
- **52 healthcare assistant appointments**
- **34 pharmacist appointments**

**due to patients not attending for their arranged appointments.**

**We understand there are many reasons why patients may not be able to attend, or may overlook their appointments.**

**We would kindly - but strongly - ask you are not able to attend your appointment, or you do not intend to attend your appointment - that you cancel it (and rebook at a future point if appropriate), so you can free this slot up for your fellow patient; someone may be very grateful for it!**

**Where a patient repeatedly fails to attend arranged appointments, without reasonable explanation - they may place their ongoing registration with the practice at risk.**

**You can cancel your appointment by replying to the "reminder text", by cancelling it online at Patient Services, or contacting us on 02890 325679.**

**If you do not receive our reminder texts, please contact the surgery so we can check we have your up-to-date mobile telephone number.**

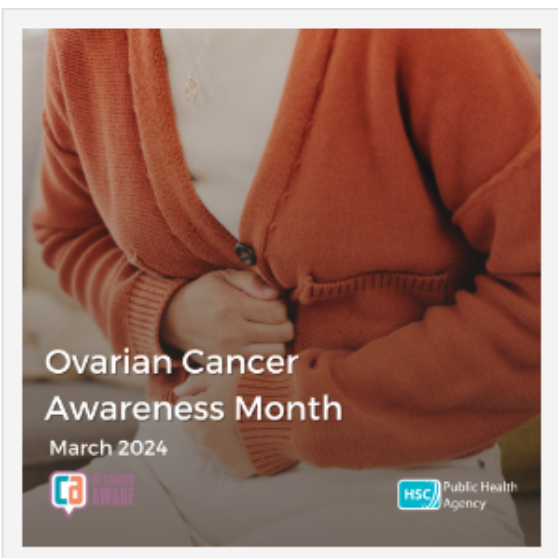




**With over one in five 11 to 16 year olds in Northern Ireland reporting having used an e-cigarette, the Public Health Agency (PHA) is working with partners to produce information to support discussion with young people on vaping, and raise awareness of the risks it poses given the rise in its popularity.**



**Following International HPV Awareness Day (Monday 4 March), the Public Health Agency highlights the importance of both vaccination and cervical screening to help drive down rates of HPV-related cancers.**



**This Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month [March], the Public Health Agency (PHA) is reminding people to be aware of the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer. From 2016 – 2020, there were around 200 cases of ovarian cancer diagnosed in Northern Ireland each year. The PHA is urging women to speak to their GP as soon as possible if they notice any of the common symptoms.**

## Healthy choices

Choose wisely: advice for parents on nutrition and activity for primary school children



## Keeping children safe

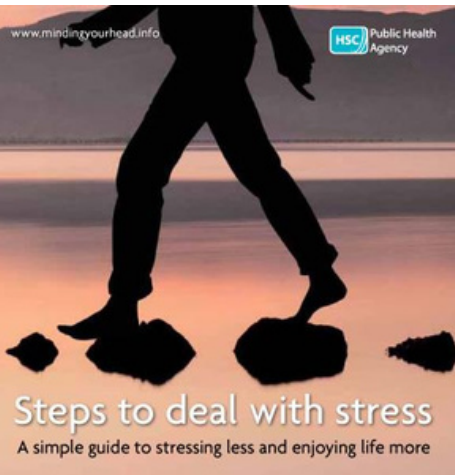
Home safety for children under five



Ageing well by being active every day



www.mindingyourhead.info



## Take the next step



TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND CHOOSE TO LIVE BETTER

## Take5 steps to wellbeing



### Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is an essential vitamin for everyone. It is important for bone and muscle health and may also have a role in the body's immune response to respiratory viruses. Babies and young children who don't get enough vitamin D before they are born or in their early lives, can be at risk of developing rickets, which causes weak and badly formed bones.

Adults and older people who don't have enough vitamin D can develop a condition where the bones become soft and there is a greater risk of broken bones known as osteomalacia.

## Enjoy healthy eating



## Bowel cancer screening

### The facts



Information for those on longer-term painkillers