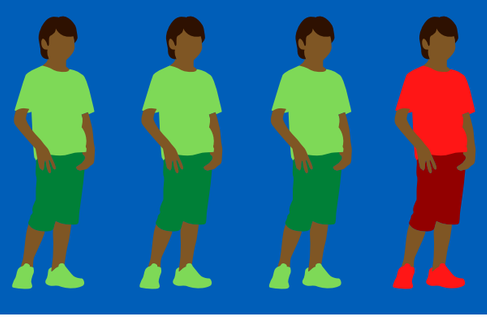
The Real Dangers of Missing Vaccinations

NHS
North West London
Clinical Commissioning Group

How many children are being vaccinated in London?

For 2019-20, London had the worst vaccination rates for all parts of the UK. For some vaccinations, up to 1 in 4 children had not been vaccinated so weren't protected against illness and death.

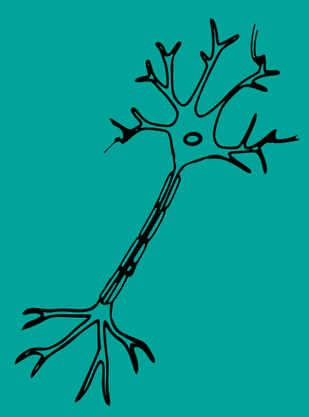


What diseases do vaccines protect against?

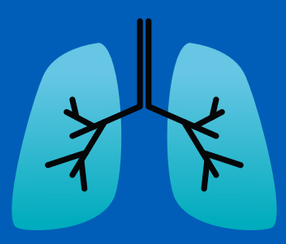
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis b
- Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)
- Polio
- Tetanus
- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- Rotavirus
- Meningitis
- Pneumococcus
- Rotavirus
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Flu
- HPV

Tetanus

Tetanus is a bug commonly found in areas that children are known to be around such as soil. It can enter the body through cuts, e.g. from rusty nails. Inside the body, tetanus releases a toxin which can damage nerves. This can cause stiffness in your jaw muscles (lockjaw), making it difficult to open your mouth. It can also lead to painful muscle spasms, making it difficult to breathe and swallow, and can lead to death.



Whooping cough



Whooping cough can give children severe lung infections (pneumonia). Young children develop a characteristic cough (a 'whoop') and vomiting. The breathing difficulties can damage the lungs, and reduce blood reaching the brain and cause brain damage and even death.

What does this mean for your children?

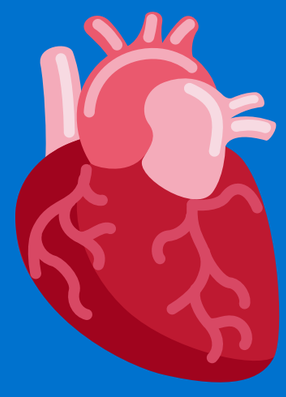
If children aren't vaccinated, this means they are at greater risk of getting ill and dying from infectious diseases. Protect your children by ensuring they are vaccinated.

Meningitis

Meningitis is a life threatening disease. It is the leading cause of death in early childhood from any infection. The bug (bacteria) that causes the infection is called 'Meningococcus'. It is a type of bacteria which can cause meningitis, an infection of the linings of the brain and spine. Meningococcus infection can also cause overwhelming blood poisoning (called sepsis), brain damage and fits (epilepsy). It can even lead to children losing their arms and legs due to tissue death. We also vaccinate babies and children against another bug called Haemophilus influenzae. This bug can cause meningitis, upper airway obstruction ('epiglottitis') and sepsis, and can lead to long term effects including deafness, fits and brain damage.

Rubella

To look after your child's future, it is imperative to vaccinate against Rubella (also known as German Measles). Rubella causes most damage to the baby growing in the womb, where it can cause miscarriage, blindness, deafness, heart defects and damage the developing brain. Infection with rubella in the first eight to ten weeks of pregnancy damages up to 90% of surviving children. If children catch rubella, they can develop a high temperature, pink spotty rash, coughs, headaches and swollen lymph nodes/ 'glands'.



Common Vaccine Concerns Answered

North West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Will my child be protected by herd immunity if I don't get them vaccinated?

No. Lower vaccination rates mean herd immunity is not as strong. If your child isn't vaccinated, they can then also pass infection to others who aren't able to get protected yet, like young babies and pregnant women, who can then get very ill and die.

Is it safe for children to have several vaccines at once?

Yes. Children come into contact with many bacteria and viruses every day. Their immune systems are very able to respond to multiple vaccines at once. If you spread these vaccines out rather than giving them together, your child is left unprotected for longer.

Will catching the disease make my child's immune system stronger?

If your child is infected, their immune system learns how to better defend against that same infection if they are infected again. The body does this by making 'memory immune cells'. Catching the infection though, means your child can get very ill and die, so getting vaccinated stops that risk.
vaccinations teach your child's immune system to make a ready-made defence against infection called antibodies, in case they meet the infection in future-so they don't get infected and don't get ill.

Is the MMR linked with autism?

No. There is no link between the MMR and autism. MMR does not cause or increase the risk of your child developing autism. This has been shown in studies of hundreds of thousands of children. For details of these studies, please see this webpage by the Oxford Vaccine Group at Oxford University.

Further information

(i) Vaccine Knowledge Group, Oxford Vaccine Group, University of Oxford answering common vaccine questions
(ii) NHS webpage on meningitis
(iii) NHS webpage on tetanus
(iv) NHS webpage on rubella
(v) NHS webpage on whooping cough
(vi) NHS webpage discussing when to receive each vaccine in the UK

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