Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine

Having MMR after your baby

Why am I being offered the MMR vaccine?

Rubella can be serious for pregnant women due to the risks to the unborn baby. For this reason, all pregnant women are offered a blood test to check if they are immune against rubella.

If your blood test shows that you are not immune, then you may be at risk of catching rubella. This will be the case if you have not had rubella in the past or you do not have immunity from a previous vaccination.

If you are protected against these infections then you cannot pass them on to your unborn baby or other family and friends in the future.

What is the MMR vaccine?

The MMR vaccine contains weakened measles, mumps and rubella viruses. Giving live vaccines in pregnancy is not generally recommended. The measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine will therefore be offered to you immediately after your baby is born.

What does MMR protect against?

The MMR vaccine protects against three highly infectious viral diseases that can cause serious illness and complications. It is important to make sure everyone is fully protected.

**Measles:** can affect people of all ages and it is not possible to tell who will become seriously ill. However, it can particularly affect young children or older adults. Symptoms include a high fever and rash. Complications include chest infections, fits and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). It can also cause miscarriage and serious illness in pregnancy. In very severe case, measles can also cause death.

**Mumps:** can cause fever, headaches and painful, swollen glands in the face, neck and jaw. Serious complications include deafness, viral meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain) and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). It can also cause painful swelling of the testicles in males and the ovaries in females.
Rubella (German Measles): is usually a mild illness and many people have no symptoms. In others, it can cause a skin rash, swollen glands and a sore throat. Rubella can be very serious in pregnancy as the unborn baby can be affected. It can cause damage to hearing, sight, heart or brain. This condition is called congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, rubella causes CRS in up to nine out of ten cases. In many cases pregnant women catch rubella from children. This is why all children are offered MMR vaccination at one year of age and just before starting school.

How many vaccinations do I need?
If your blood test shows that you are not immune to rubella, we recommend that you receive two doses of the MMR vaccine:

- the first dose soon after your baby is born
- the second dose at least four weeks later

It is important that you receive two doses of MMR before you become pregnant again.

How and when is the MMR vaccination given?
The MMR vaccination is given by injection into the upper arm.

The first dose will usually be given before you leave hospital and for convenience, the second dose can be given by your GP to fit with your six to eight week postnatal appointment.

It is important to have two doses of MMR to be fully protected.

Are there any side effects?
The MMR vaccine is made from viruses that are similar to those which cause the natural diseases, but have been weakened. It may cause a mild form of the disease that it protects against but these cannot be passed on to others, or cause infection.

How effective is the MMR vaccine?
Two doses of the MMR vaccine are highly effective, providing over 99% protection against measles and rubella.

Can I just have the rubella vaccine?
Single rubella vaccine is no longer available in the UK. MMR vaccine is recognised as the best available vaccination against rubella. Having the MMR vaccine should not cause you any harm even if you have had natural measles, mumps or rubella infections or single vaccines previously. MMR will ensure you are protected against all three infections.
Will the MMR vaccine affect my future pregnancies?

MMR will not affect your future pregnancies. We advise that once you have had the MMR vaccine, you should avoid becoming pregnant for at least four weeks.

What if I become pregnant again straight away?

There is substantial evidence that the rubella part of the vaccine does not harm the unborn baby.

If you should become pregnant within four weeks of having the MMR vaccine, there is no reason to expect any problems for you or your baby. However, we would advise that you please tell your GP or midwife.

I’m not planning to have any more babies so why do I need the MMR vaccine?

Measles and mumps can be very serious illness outside of pregnancy. Being protected against rubella will also stop you from spreading rubella to other pregnant women, for whom the infection could be very serious.

Is it safe to breastfeed following the MMR Vaccine?

Yes. The MMR vaccine will do no harm to you or your baby if you choose to breastfeed.

Does the MMR vaccine cause autism?

There is an overwhelming amount of scientific evidence suggesting that there is no link between MMR and autism.

How can I find out more information?

Please discuss this with your GP, midwife or health visitor at your next appointment. Or visit:

www.nhs.uk
www.hpa.org.uk

Based on leaflet produced by Health Protection Agency
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

**Help with this leaflet:**

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.info@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Document history**

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