



Dear Doctor

Measles in England

I am writing to advise you about the current situation with measles in England and remind you about eligibility for MMR vaccine.

Patients over the age of three years and four months who do not have two recorded doses of MMR vaccine remain eligible to receive two doses. There is no upper age limit to offering MMR vaccine and practices should maximise opportunities to ensure that patients are fully vaccinated:

- catching up children aged 15 years or younger is covered under the global sum
- an item of service fee can be claimed manually via the CQRS MMR programme (aged 16 and over) for each dose of MMR administered to patients aged 16 years or over. This includes patients born before 1970 who have no history of measles or MMR vaccination.

It should be noted that central MMR vaccine stock can be used to catch-up anyone of any age.

Payment enquiries may be directed to ENGLAND.londonimms@nhs.net

England measles epidemiology and recent outbreaks

From the 1 January to the 30 September 2017 there have been a total of 118 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England. Thirty (25%) of these are known to be importations (average age 15 years, Range: 8 months to 56 years), which have led to limited onward transmission (at least 5 cases), mainly among un- or under-immunised extended household contacts. Twenty-two (73%) of the England importations were linked to travel within Europe, with Romania contributing the largest number of cases (n=8). Fifty nine of the measles cases up to the end of September were in adults over 18 years of age with a correspondingly high hospitalisation rate of 51%.

In September an outbreak was declared in the Stroud area linked to a Steiner school with very low MMR uptake rates and this has led to some limited spread within the community. In addition, since the beginning of November outbreaks have been declared in Leeds and in Liverpool, both arising from importations from Romania which have spread within the Romanian and other under vaccinated communities. This brings the provisional total of laboratory confirmed measles cases in



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England up to 155 by the 17th November. This is still well below the 548 total number of confirmed measles cases in England in 2016.

Earlier this year an outbreak in the south-east region of Wales arising from an importation from Romania led to seventeen confirmed cases (May to August 2017) in part fuelled by links to schools with low MMR coverage.

I recommend you raise awareness of measles amongst your team ahead of the coming holiday season and be alert to the infection in those who have recently travelled. Please ensure you isolate any patients with a rash-like illness on arrival at your surgery and report suspected cases to your local health protection team. Please also take every opportunity to encourage MMR vaccination within your staff and patient population.

Yours sincerely

Dr Deborah Turbitt

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