

# News Release



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## **Call for young Cumbrians to protect themselves against measles**

Young people in Cumbria are being encouraged to protect themselves against measles by making sure they have received both does of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine.

The call by Cumbria County Council's Acting Director of Public Health echoes advice from Public Health England, which is now responsible for vaccination and immunisation programmes in the county.

This month has seen a number of measles outbreaks in different parts of the England and Wales.

So far, only one case of measles has been confirmed in Cumbria this year (2013) and the number of parents protecting their children from the disease in the county is high (95 per cent).

Despite the high take-up rates, several thousand teenagers in Cumbria will be unprotected because they were not vaccinated as children when concerns, later discredited, about the MMR vaccine were widely reported.

Measles is an infectious viral illness that is spread when infected people cough or sneeze. It can have serious complications and in some cases prove fatal.

The most common symptoms are fever, cough, sore eyes and a rash that develops three or four days after the onset of illness, starting with the face and head and spreading down the body.

Doses of the MMR vaccine are usually given at 13 months and between the ages of three and four. However children of any age, right up to young adults, should consider vaccination if they missed out at the recommended ages.

Dr Rebecca Wagstaff, Cumbria's Acting Director of Public Health, said: "While vaccination rates amongst children in Cumbria are currently amongst the highest in the country, there are still a number of teenagers who failed to get protected when they were younger.

"It is not too late and no one, anywhere in Cumbria, should take the risk of catching measles when a safe and effective vaccine is available."

Anyone who is concerned or wants more information on how to get themselves protected should speak to their GP, Health Visitor or Practice Nurse.

More information on measles and the MMR is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)