

Increasing uptake for vaccinations

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1. What do we know? What do we know about vaccinations and who is most at risk of not receiving them?

Immunisations protect children against disease and save lives. No medical intervention has done more. When enough children are vaccinated, it is hard for the disease to be passed on which protects those people who are unable to receive a vaccination themselves. To prevent diseases spreading at least 90% of children need to be immune; The World Health Organisation recommends that 95% of children are vaccinated. It's important to keep the uptake of vaccinations high as childhood diseases can return quickly; there has recently been a cluster of cases of measles in London and the East of England.

Some groups of children and young people are at risk of not being fully immunised:

- those who have missed previous vaccinations (whether as a result of parental choice or otherwise)
- looked after children
- those with physical or learning disabilities
- children of teenage or lone parents
- those not registered with a GP
- younger children from large families
- children who are hospitalized or have a chronic illness
- those from some minority ethnic groups
- those from non-English speaking families
- vulnerable children, such as those whose families are travelers, asylum seekers or are homeless.

| 2. What works to increase the uptake of immunisations?

Immunisations for 0-5 year olds are provided by General Practice. There are a number of things that Practices can do to increase uptake:

- Have a lead for immunisations
- Ensure clinic times are family friendly and have sufficient capacity
- Regularly check the uptake figures to ensure they remain high
- Ensure their data is accurately representing who has and hasn't been immunised
- Ensure their data is being reported through national systems accurately
- Ensure the children on their lists are still under their care
- Have a comprehensive reminder and recall system for parents; postal and telephone reminders are known to be effective
- Check immunisation status opportunistically when children attend the practice and vaccinate at the time if required and possible, if not to organise an appointment for the future

Health Visitors should discuss immunisations with families during their mandated checks and check their status. Referrals should be made to primary care if immunisation is required and consented to.

Immunisation status can be checked at hospital in- or outpatient, accident and emergency departments, walk-in centres or minor injuries units. If required and consented to, vaccinate at the time, if not to refer to primary care.

School public health services, working with GP practices and schools, should check the vaccination status of school when they start or transfer to a new school. If they are not up to date, information should be provided to the families in the most appropriate way. Families should also be assisted if needed to access primary care services to catch up with the immunisation schedule.

Immunisation teams in schools should have robust processes to school aged children have the opportunity to engage with the immunisation programme

School Public Health Services should ensure that families and young people are supported and are provided with appropriate information to engage with the school aged immunisation programme.

Children's centres can publicise the immunisation schedule. Training should be provided to enable staff to answer questions families may have about immunisations

Additional support should be given to those children and young people at risk of not receiving immunisations. For example: culturally appropriate messaging for certain groups, flexible appointments or home visits.

| 3. Questions you might need to ask

- Are there any populations in your community that are less likely to receive immunisations? Are they being appropriately supported to engage with the immunisation programme.
- Is information available to inform families about the immunisation schedule?
- Are there any community initiatives locally where immunisation can be supported and information circulated?
- Are there any practices which have lower uptakes for immunisations? Have they been supported to increase uptake? Have they considered what the reasons may be and taken remedial action?
- Are children's centre staffs adequately trained to answer family's questions about immunisations?
- Do Health Visitors and School Nurse's check immunisation status and engage families with the programme?
- Are immunisation messages delivered and supported in school?

| 4. Who to involve?

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- NHS England
- GP practices
- Health visitors
- School nurses
- Schools
- Children's Centres
- Local community and voluntary sector organisations working with 0-5 year olds
- Youth hubs

| Resources/further information:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph21>

<http://www.londonhp.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Childhood-Immunisation-in-London-Sharing-Good-Practice.pdf>