



IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER
January 2017

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information and updates about immunisation programmes to Health Visitors, School Nurses, Children Centre staff and Nurseries across Surrey and Sussex.

URGENT SUPPORT NEEDED!!

Uptake of childhood immunisations

Recent data shows that there has been a decrease in the uptake of some childhood immunisations across Surrey and Sussex. The diseases covered by the immunisation programmes are now so rare that it is easy to underestimate the importance of these vaccinations. However, if uptake rates continue to fall this may result in outbreaks of these diseases. There has already been a rise in the number of cases of measles since January 2016. In Surrey and Sussex, the latest COVER data for uptake of MMR vaccinations for Q2 2016/17 (July to September 2016) are as follows:

Area	MMR 1 (by the age of 2 years)	MMR 2 by the age of 5 years
Surrey	85.9	76.2
East Sussex	91.0	88.1
West Sussex	91.4	83.4
Brighton & Hove	88.4	81.9

The World Health Organisation target for immunisation uptake is **95%**; this will deliver herd immunity within the population. Herd immunity occurs when a high percentage of the population is vaccinated, as it is difficult for infectious diseases to spread, because there are fewer people who can be infected. In Surrey & Sussex, both MMR 1 and 2 uptake is below 95%.

The Screening and Immunisation Team are working with Child Health Information Systems (CHIS) and GP practices to identify unvaccinated children and so that they are invited for their outstanding vaccinations.

Health Visitors, School Nurses, Children's Centres and Nursery staff play an important role in supporting and encouraging parents to ensure that they take their children to their immunisation appointments. We would like to request all Health Visitors, School Nurses and Children Centre staff to use every available opportunity to discuss the importance of the routine childhood immunisation programme and encourage parents to contact their GP to arrange to have any immunisations that their child may have missed. Parents can discuss any concerns that they may have with their practice nurses as well.

For further information about the immunisation programme parents should be directed to NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/vaccination-schedule-age-checklist.aspx>

Individuals who have missed or not completed the immunisation programme

Parents of children who have not completed the immunisation schedule or have moved from abroad have followed a different immunisation schedule, should be encouraged to visit the GP to discuss and complete their outstanding immunisations.

For further information the complete immunisation schedule can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-complete-routine-immunisation-schedule>

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination

There has been an increase in reported cases of measles this year and Public Health England are encouraging practices to opportunistically check the immunisation status of their patients and to offer MMR vaccination to those with incomplete vaccination history.

There is no upper age limit for the vaccination so all family members should be encouraged to contact their GP if they are concerned that they have not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine. This is particularly important for any teenagers within the family as there have been a number of cases of measles diagnosed within this age group.

For further information and posters to display please see below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mmr-vaccination-call-following-recent-measles-cases>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-measles-poster-about-measles-in-young-people>

Pertussis in pregnancy vaccination

Whooping cough (Pertussis) is a highly infectious, serious illness that can lead to pneumonia and brain damage, particularly in young babies. Most babies with whooping cough will need hospital treatment and when whooping cough is very severe they may die.

The diagnosed cases of whooping cough increased substantially in 2012, with more than 9,000 cases in England. Whooping cough was diagnosed in 400 babies under three months old and 14 of those babies died. Since the introduction of the pertussis in pregnancy vaccination the number of cases in babies has fallen.

The pertussis vaccination can now be given to pregnant women from 20 weeks gestation by their GP practice. Currently uptake for the vaccination is around 66% across Surrey & Sussex. GP practices have been encouraged to identify their cohort of pregnant women and offer the vaccine as soon as possible after 20 weeks as this is the optimal time to ensure maximum protection. This vaccination programme protects the mother, foetus (via transfer of antibodies through the placenta) and the baby until they are old enough to have their first set of primary immunisations at 8 weeks. Pregnant women should have the vaccine during each pregnancy to protect their baby.

There have been some cases of whooping cough in young babies in Sussex and therefore it is important that all women are offered the opportunity to receive the vaccination at the optimal time during pregnancy. Please encourage all pregnant women to contact their GP to book an appointment.

For further information please see link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccination-against-pertussis-whooping-cough-for-pregnant-women>

Neonatal Hepatitis B immunisation programme

The neonatal Hepatitis B immunisation is given to:

- babies born to mothers who are Hepatitis B positive
- babies living in a household where a member of the family is Hepatitis B positive
- babies identified as having other clinical risk factors

The programme continues to have an excellent uptake across Surrey and Sussex. The immunisation schedule is as follows: birth, one month, two months and one year. If you are aware that a baby is following this immunisation schedule please encourage parents to attend all appointments.

For further information on the Hepatitis B immunisation programme please follow the link below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/hepatitis-b-vaccine.aspx>

Seasonal flu vaccination programme

The flu vaccination season is drawing to a close; however those who are eligible and have not yet been vaccinated should be encouraged to contact their GP for their flu vaccination. The outbreak of flu can occur at any point over the winter months therefore the vaccination can still offer protection.

Influenza (flu) is an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract characterised by fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain and fatigue and is easily transmitted to others. For otherwise healthy individuals, flu is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease with recovery within two to seven days. The risk of serious illness from flu is higher among children under six months of age, older people and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory disease, cardiac disease or immunosuppression, as well as pregnant women. Whilst it is not possible to fully predict the strains that will circulate in any given season, flu vaccination remains the best protection we have against an unpredictable virus.

Pregnant women and children aged 2, 3 or 4 years (DOB 01/09/11 - 31/08/14) who have not been vaccinated this season should be encouraged to book an appointment with their GP.

Any family member aged 6 months to 65 years who has a long term or chronic health condition* and all those aged over 65 years are also eligible and should book an appointment with their GP practice.

Individuals with the following conditions* are eligible for the vaccination:

- chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease at stage three, four or five
- chronic liver disease
- chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease, or learning disability
- diabetes
- splenic dysfunction
- a weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)

For further information please follow the links below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/child-flu-vaccine.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-plan-winter-2016-to-2017>

OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Screening and Immunisation Team Tel: 01138 247 447 . Team email: phe.screening-immssat@nhs.net
Please contact us if you require any information.