

# Understanding CHILDHOOD VACCINATION

A simple guide for families

## Why vaccinations matter

Vaccinations help protect children from serious illnesses such as measles, mumps, rubella and whooping cough. They also help protect vulnerable people in the community who may be unable to receive certain vaccines themselves.

## Why do some children miss vaccinations?

There are lots of reasons a child may be behind on their vaccinations, including:

- Missed GP appointments
- Changes in family circumstances
- Illness at the time of a scheduled vaccine
- Uncertainty or unanswered questions

If your child has missed a vaccination, it's usually possible to catch up - your GP or practice nurse can advise.

## Are vaccinations safe?

Vaccines used in the UK go through strict testing and monitoring.

Most children experience no side effects or only mild ones, such as a sore arm or a slight fever.

For personalised medical advice, families should always speak to their GP, practice nurse or school nurse.

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## How can I check whether my child's vaccinations are up to date?

- Contact your GP practice.
- Check your child's Red Book (Personal Child Health Record)
- Speak to your local school nursing team

### Where can I find trusted information?

We recommend using:

- NHS vaccination guidance
- Your GP practice or health visitor
- Local school nursing services

Be cautious about information shared on social media or online forums, which may not be evidence-based.

Making decisions about your child's health can feel overwhelming.

**If you have questions or concerns, you're not alone – healthcare professionals are there to help.**