UK Health Security Agency

NHS

# Is your child eligible for an MMRV vaccine?

**If your child was born between 1 January 2020 and 31 August 2022,** they can now have a single dose of MMRV vaccine, to help protect them against chickenpox.



immunisation
the safest way to protect your child

## What is the MMRV vaccine?

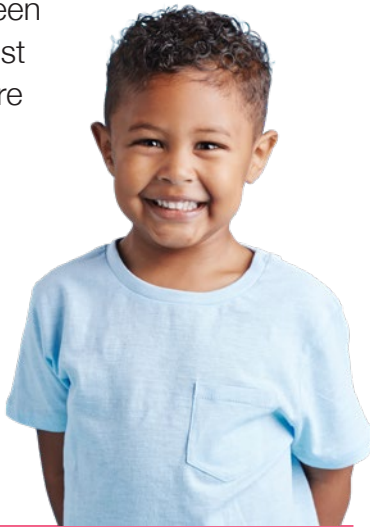
From 1 January 2026, the MMRV replaced the MMR in the routine immunisation schedule to protect children from measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox (varicella).

Your child will already have been offered two MMR vaccines when they were aged 12 months and 3 years and 4 months old, but won't have been offered MMRV at a routine appointment.

## What is the single dose catch-up programme?

Between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2028, children born between 1 January 2020 and 31 August 2022 will be offered a single dose of MMRV. This is to help protect children against chickenpox if:

- They have not had chickenpox before
- They have not been vaccinated against chickenpox before (two doses)



## What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is an infectious disease caused by the varicella zoster virus. It is very common in young children and causes a fever and an itchy, spotty rash. These spots can be painful and appear all over the body. Some children have serious complications including chest infection, fits, and encephalitis. It is more severe in adults, especially pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. Later in life, the chickenpox virus can re-activate and cause a painful rash. This is called shingles. It is worse in older people and in people with weakened immune systems.

## Will one dose of MMRV protect against chickenpox?

One dose of MMRV gives very good protection against chickenpox. It is more than 90% effective at protecting against any chickenpox infection, and around 99% effective at protecting against severe chickenpox infection.

All children need to have two doses of an MMR-containing vaccine (MMR or MMRV) to be fully protected against measles, mumps, and rubella.

## Is it safe to have MMRV if my child has already had 2 MMRs?

Yes. If your child has already had two MMRs, their immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella will stop the weakened viruses in the vaccine from replicating. It is safe to give three vaccines containing MMR.

## Should my child have the MMRV catch-up dose if they have already had chickenpox or chickenpox vaccine?

If your child has already had chickenpox, or been fully vaccinated (two doses of a chickenpox vaccine), they will not benefit from this MMRV catch-up dose. That's because they are already immune to chickenpox.

However, it is still safe for your child to receive the MMRV, so if you are unsure of whether they have had chickenpox before, it is better to have the vaccine.



## Should anyone not have the MMRV?

There are very few reasons why children cannot be immunised. However, your child should not have the MMRV if:

- they have a weakened immune system. This is because the MMRV contains weakened, living viruses
- they have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or one of its ingredients

If you think this applies to your child, speak to your GP or practice nurse.

## How can I arrange an appointment?

The catch-up programme will run from 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2028. You should be contacted by your GP to have your child vaccinated in that time. This could be via a letter, text, phone call, or email. If you think you should have been invited but haven't, speak to your GP practice to book the appointment.

## Where can I find more information?

More information on the MMRV vaccine is available here:

**MMRV vaccination**
**https://qrco.de/ukmmrv**

Scan Me

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**Information about Chickenpox – NHS**

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