

# Your Voice Your Health



## AFRICAN CARIBBEAN TODDLERS FACE THREAT OF MEASLES EPIDEMIC

# Measles is spreading in Brent

Don't let your child catch it  
Here are the facts



**NHS**  
Brent

[www.immunisation.nhs.uk](http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk)

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**A**uthors of the controversial 1998 medical study, that suggested there was a link between the MMR jab, autism and bowel disease are facing disciplinary charges brought by the General Medical Council (GMC).

The Council was set up to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public, by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine. The GMC investigates complaints about individual doctors in order to establish their fitness to practice and has the power to remove or restrict a doctor's right to practice.

Dr Wakefield and Professors John Walker-Smith and Simon Murch, will face the Fitness to Practice Panel later this month. Lead author Dr. Wakefield stands accused of serious professional misconduct, in relation to allegedly undertaking the measles rubella vaccination 1998 study, without proper ethical approval. Dr. Wakefield also allegedly failed to conduct the research in accordance to the terms set by the ethic committee and without the requisite paediatric qualification. The research has been slammed as unsound and blamed by prominent medical experts for creating major distrust and moral panic over MMR's side effects.

### NUMBER OF PARENTS REJECTING MMR JAB ROCKETS

The upsurge in measles cases is hitting the African Caribbean community, with Brent seeing the lowest levels of immunisation uptake in decades. Dollis Hill, Harlesden, Kensal Green and Willesden Green have the highest reported number of measles cases for this totally preventable disease. To stop measles spreading, and guarantee population immunity, medical experts suggest at least 95 per cent of children in England and Wales need to be vaccinated. Currently London's uptake is less than 80 per cent.

In spite of repeated reassurances from the Department of Health that the triple jab measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe, many parents remain confused and fearful over its side effects, following Dr. Wakefield's research and continue to underestimate the danger of leaving children under 18 unprotected. The Department of Health's recent large-scale studies found no credible evidence linking autism or bowel disease to MMR and have said that parents need not be afraid of the jab.

"Parents who have not had their children vaccinated with the MMR vaccine should do so now," said Professor David Salisbury, director of immunisation at the Department of Health. "The evidence on MMR is absolutely clear there is no link between the vaccine and autism."

"The MMR vaccine coverage is not high enough to remove the threat of recurrence of measles outbreaks. Measles is serious and in some cases it can be fatal. Delaying immunisation puts children at risk."

A least three million children aged between 18 months and 18 years are estimated to have missed either their first or second MMR vaccination, according to government statistics.

### PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM MEASLES NOW

- Measles is one of the most infectious diseases known to the human race.
- A simple cough or sneeze can spread the measles virus over a wide area.
- The risk of catching measles is greatest in children who have received no MMR vaccine.
- The more children that are not vaccinated, the more rapidly measles will spread.
- Some children cannot have MMR because they have conditions such as leukaemia. They can only be protected if enough healthy children are vaccinated so measles is eliminated.
- A child with measles will have to spend about five days in bed and may be off school for ten days.
- Adults are likely to be ill for longer.
- About 1 in 15 children with measles develop serious complications such as: fever, rash, diarrhoea, chest infections, fits, infection of the brain (encephalitis), brain damage.
- Measles can kill.
- MMR is safe.

### NEXT WEEK

*Your Voice  
Your Health*

Investigates the myths  
behind the MMR JAB