

ADVERTORIAL

Your Voice Your Health



Don't let your child catch **MEASLES FOR CHRISTMAS**

Measles is spreading in Brent

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



NHS
Brent

www.immunisation.nhs.uk

by Jacqueline Asafu-Adjaye

The number of recorded measles has reached an all time high, according to this month's figures published by the Health Protection Agency. Their statistics show 1,049 people up to the end of October to be infected with this highly contagious and in some incidents deadly virus. London takes the lion share of cases with a reported 626 confirmed cases of measles.

NHS Brent, Brent Council and the Health Protection Agency have raised the alarm, as measles is soaring borough wide. Parents in Dollis Hill, Harlesden, Kensal Green and Willesden Green hold the key to stemming the tide of the spread of measles in Brent. Brent has the highest level of confirmed measles cases in North West London. A report on this year's measles cases found African Caribbean and Somali communities living in Brent to be amongst the worst affected. Low levels of immunisation uptake over the last decade are being blamed for this totally preventable disease.

The controversy surrounding MMR's side effects and parents feeling in the dark about how the vaccine works has been blamed as the root cause for low take up amongst a generation of children.

Last week's inquest of toddler George Fisher has thrust the safety of the triple jab back into the limelight. A Health

Protection Agency spokesman said to Your Voice Your Health:

"The sudden and untimely death of a young child is always tragic and our thoughts are with the family of George Fisher.

"The coroner concluded following testimony from a range of paediatricians and consultants that there was no evidence of a link between George's death and the administration of the MMR vaccine.

"We hope that the theory that MMR was somehow implicated in George's death does not cause parents to question the safety and value of MMR in protecting their children against measles, mumps and rubella.

There is overwhelming evidence in support of the safety of MMR vaccine and parents should be reassured that the vaccine is the safest and most effective form of protection against these three infections.

"Public confidence in MMR is now high with more than 8 out of 10 children receiving one dose of the vaccine by their second birthday."

Whilst Professor Elizabeth Miller, an immunisation expert for the Health Protection Agency, said the MMR jab can cause a febrile convulsion in one child in two to three thousand. She could, however see no direct link between the jab and the toddler's death.

Your Voice Your Health tells you how the MMR vaccine works in your child's body

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine works to protect your child from contracting these three diseases, which if left unvaccinated, can create serious complications such as brain damage and fits. German Measles other wise known as Rubella, if caught during pregnancy can be serious because it can cause birth defects to develop in the unborn baby such as blindness or deafness.

- The MMR vaccine contains micro doses of living but dormant viruses that cause measles, mumps and rubella. Once a child receives the triple jab, their immune system will develop antibodies against the three diseases shortly after vaccination.

- MMR is administered twice to children in order to offer maximum protection. Two MMR jabs ensure the creation of antibodies that give lifelong protection against all three diseases.

- The vaccination schedule is usu-

ally given between 12-15 month and pre-school.

- If you cannot remember if your child has had one or two MMR jabs, then NHS advice that: if there is any doubt it is better to have an additional dose of MMR, since it poses no risk to your child's health, even if they have had two vaccinations of MMR.

It makes sense to vaccinate against measles

Sense a charity set up by parents of children with rubella damage which provides support to deafblind people, says yes to MMR:

"Sense supports current Government policy on MMR, which is to promote uptake for all children who are able to receive vaccinations. Single vaccines would leave children unprotected for extended periods and raise the likelihood of epidemics."