

NHS Winter Support Services in Merton 2024/25

Information pack

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1. Vaccinations



Why winter vaccines are important

Key messages:

- Flu and Covid-19 spread more easily in winter when we spend more time together indoors and can cause serious illness.
 - It is important to top up your protection, even if you have had a vaccine or been ill with flu or Covid-19 before, as immunity fades over time and these viruses change each year.
 - As well as protecting you and the people around you, vaccination also protects the NHS over winter by reducing the number of people that are likely to get seriously ill from catching a virus and needing to go to hospital.
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- Respiratory viruses, such as flu, usually reach their peak over the festive and new year period. The vaccines provide the best possible protection and reduce the risk of serious illness during the colder months.
 - Over the last few years winter vaccines have kept tens of thousands of people out of hospital and helped to save countless lives.
 - Having your winter vaccines will reduce your risk of serious illness and you're more likely to have milder symptoms and recover quicker if you do catch the viruses.
 - All flu and Covid-19 vaccines offered by the NHS have a good safety record. They have been tested on thousands of people across the world and have met the strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness outlined by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Key messages:

- The Covid-19 vaccine helps protect against Covid-19, which can be a serious or life-threatening illness.
 - Getting the Covid-19 vaccine can help reduce your risk of getting severe symptoms, help you recover more quickly if you catch Covid-19, help reduce your risk of having to go to hospital or dying from Covid-19 and protect against different types of Covid-19 virus.
 - If you're eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine, you can: book online or in the NHS App; visit a walk-in Covid vaccination site or call 119.
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- The Covid-19 vaccine is recommended for people at increased risk from Covid-19. You may be offered free a Covid-19 vaccine if you:
 - are aged 65 or over
 - are pregnant
 - are aged 6 months to 64 years and have an increased risk of getting seriously ill from Covid-19 because of a health condition or treatment
 - live in a care home for older adults

All eligible adults are now able to [book their Covid-19 vaccination.](#)

Key messages:

- The flu vaccine helps protect against flu, which can be a serious or life-threatening illness. It's offered on the NHS every year in autumn or early winter to people at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu.
- Most eligible adults will be able to get their flu vaccine from 3 October. This may be later than you've had the vaccine before, but it means you'll have the best protection when flu is most widespread. Pregnant women and children will continue to be able to get the flu vaccine from September.
- If you're eligible for an NHS flu vaccine, you can: book a flu vaccination appointment at a pharmacy online or in the NHS App (if you're aged 18 or over), find a pharmacy that offers NHS flu vaccination (if you're aged 18 or over) or contact your GP surgery to book an appointment.

This year those eligible for a free flu vaccine include:

- are 65 and over
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get a severe infection due to a weakened immune system.

[Book or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)



Key messages:

- Children are more likely to catch and spread winter viruses like flu. Vaccinating them also helps protect others who are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu, such as babies and older people.
- The flu vaccine will stop your child getting very ill with flu and speed recovery, it will help protect your child against serious complications including bronchitis and pneumonia.
- School-aged children can get their flu vaccine through school or community venues. Those aged 2-3 years old (on 31 August 2024) and in clinical risk groups can get the flu vaccine at their GP surgery. School-aged children (from reception to Year 11) will mainly be offered their flu vaccinations at school.

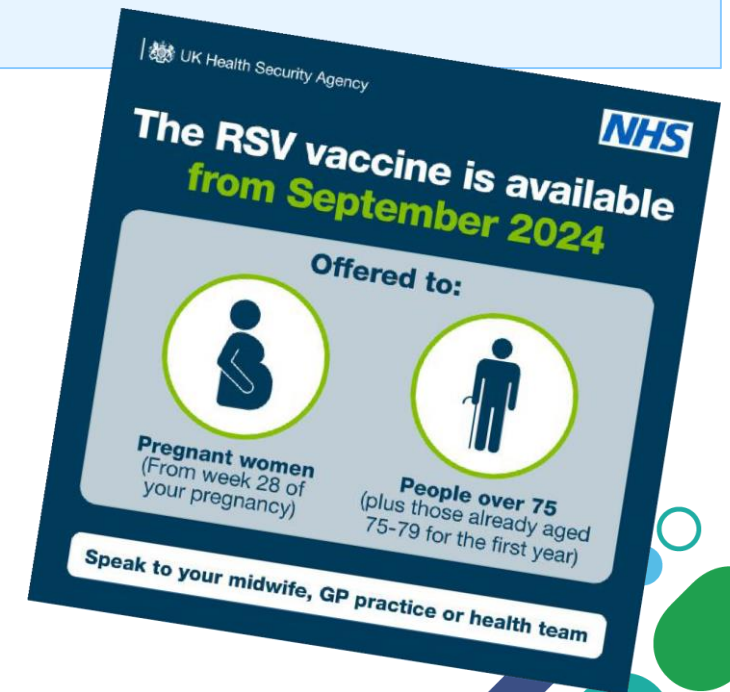
- For most children the vaccine is a nasal spray, not an injection. It is quick and painless.
- Most children have the nasal spray vaccine, which has been used for many years and has an excellent safety record. Over 30 million doses have been given in the UK since 2013.
- Some children have mild side effects including a blocked or runny nose, feeling tired or a headache. More serious side effects such as a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) are very rare. The person who vaccinates your child will be trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately.
- You cannot get flu from any of the flu vaccines.
- A vaccine injection is available which does not contain gelatine from pigs (porcine gelatine).



RSV vaccine

Key messages:

- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can cause lung infections like bronchiolitis, making it difficult for newborn babies to breathe, causing 20,000 infants to need hospital treatment each year.
 - Pregnant women are eligible for a free respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine to protect their babies from serious lung infections.
 - You can get your vaccine from 28 weeks of pregnancy.
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- Talk to your GP or maternity service to schedule yours from 28 weeks of pregnancy.
 - People aged 75-79 can get a free vaccination to protect themselves from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common lung infection that can lead to serious illnesses like pneumonia.
 - Talk to your GP or maternity service to schedule yours.



2. Pharmacy First Services

For expert advice, visit your pharmacy

Key messages:

- You can visit your local pharmacist for quick health advice. Your local pharmacist offers a wide range of services such as expert help with blood pressure checks for the over 40s.
 - Pharmacies provide services such as flu & Covid-19 vaccinations to eligible groups.
 - Pharmacists can help with lots of common conditions and minor illnesses. This can include colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains.
 - Pharmacies often offer extended opening hours in the evenings and at weekends, and there is no need to book an appointment – just walk in.
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- Most pharmacies have a private consultation room where you can discuss issues with pharmacy staff without being overheard.
 - All pharmacists train for at least 5 years in the use of medicines GPs can refer you to see a pharmacist for a range of common conditions.
 - They can also give advice about medicines. This includes how to use your medicine, worries about side effects or any other questions you have.
 - Pharmacists know when to refer you to another health care professional or doctor if you need to see one.
 - **Reminder** – Check that you have enough of your regular prescription medicines to cover you over the Christmas and New Year. You can pop in and discuss with your pharmacy when you will need to order by and what can be done in the event of you running out.



Key messages:

- Get treatment for key conditions without a GP appointment.
- People can now get treatment for seven conditions directly from their local pharmacy, without the need for a GP appointment or prescription.
- It aims to give patients quick and accessible care and ease pressure on GP services and A&E.

The services included in Pharmacy First are:

- **Earache (1 to 17 years)** - symptoms include a dull, sharp or aching pain inside the ear.
- **Sore throat (5 years and over)** - symptoms include a painful, dry or scratchy throat.
- **Sinusitis (12 years and over)** - symptoms include pain, swelling and tenderness around cheeks, eyes or forehead and a blocked or runny nose.
- **Impetigo (1 year and over)** - symptoms include red sores or blisters which commonly affect the face and hands.
- **Shingles (18 years and over)** - symptoms include a tingling or painful feeling in an area of skin and a headache followed by a painful rash.
- **Infected insect bite (1 year and over)** - symptoms include pain where bitten or stung and a small swollen lump in the skin.
- **Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (women 16-64 years)** - symptoms include pain or burning sensations when peeing and needing to pee more often.

[Find your local pharmacy](#)



3. NHS App



Key messages:

- With the NHS App you can book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, view your health records, manage referrals and more all in one place depending on your GP surgery.
 - The NHS App brings together different NHS services in one place, making it easier for you to manage your health and any care you need. It's secure and easy to use.
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- You can use the NHS App wherever you are, day or night. For managing your healthcare on the go, download the NHS App.
 - The NHS App messaging service provides a secure way for your GP to contact you via the app, instead of text message or letter. It's a simple and secure way to stay up to date with communication from your surgery.

You can contact our Digital Coordinators if you need support using the NHS App:

- **Sutton/Merton** - contact Tanuja on 020 3922 1554 (Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 2pm)
- **Croydon** - contact Elhadi on 0203 922 2558
- **Wandsworth** – contact Andraya on 02039239593 or email Andraya.catlyn@nhs.net
- **Kingston/Richmond** - contact Philippa on 020 3923 9532 (Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 2pm)

Further information including how to set up the NHS App:

[About the NHS App - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Getting started with the NHS App - NHS App help and support - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)



4. Mental Health Support



Mental health – support in Kingston, Richmond, Merton & Sutton

If you or someone you know needs help with their mental health, trusted professionals are available 24 hours a day, every day, to provide confidential advice on the support available. Please view some of the support available below.

Non-urgent – I need mental health support

- **Your GP** - Contact your GP for mental health advice and guidance, including make a referral.
- **Talking Therapies** - Self-refer to Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression – www.swlstg.nhs.uk/talking-therapies
- **NHS Every Mind Matters** - Find tips, guides, tools and activities to support and improve your mental health - www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/
- **NHS website** - Find information and support for your mental health - www.nhs.uk/mental-health/

Urgent – I need mental health support now

- **Your care team** - Contact the team providing your care if you are a patient with South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust.
- **24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line** - Call 0800 028 8000 or 111 and select the mental health option. You can call for yourself or someone else.
- **CAMHS Crisis Line** - If you're a child, young person, or a parent/carer worried about a young person's mental health, call 0203 228 5980. The line is open every day from 9am to 11pm.
- **Recovery Cafés** - Visit a Recovery Café who can help adults (18 years+) with mental health issues - www.swlstg.nhs.uk/mh-support
- **Crisis tools** - Find practical tools to help yourself cope in a crisis on the Mind website - www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/

Emergency

Call 999 or go to A&E if someone's life is at risk - for example they have seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose, or you do not feel you can keep yourself or someone else safe.

Find more information at - www.swlstg.nhs.uk/mh-support

Kooth

If you are 11-22 years old and are feeling anxious or low, you can speak to someone online for support 24/7. Kooth is a free online support service which covers all of south west London. Find out more at: www.kooth.com

5. Other key services

A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner of the slide. It features several overlapping shapes: a white teardrop shape, a green circle, a light blue circle, a dark blue oval, a light blue rounded rectangle, a dark blue diagonal bar, and a white curved line.

Key messages:

- NHS 111 can help when you need medical help or advice fast – but it's not a life-threatening emergency.
- 111 can direct you to the best place to get help if you cannot contact your GP during the day, or when your GP is closed (out-of-hours).
- You can contact NHS 111 online, over the phone or via the NHS App.

Get help online

- 111 online is for people aged 5 and over. You will answer questions about your symptoms on the website or in the NHS App and you will be told what to do next.
- You can get an emergency supply of regularly prescribed medicine from 111 online for someone of any age.
- 111 online can help with dental problems. This might mean finding a dentist, or an emergency dentist if there is availability.
- 111 cannot issue fit notes or make or cancel appointments for you in other parts of the NHS.

Get help on the phone

- Call 111 instead if you need help for a child under 5, have complex problems caused by a medical condition, have a care plan from your doctor for your current health problem, or need end of life care.

Other ways to contact 111

- Text relay: Call 18001 111 using text relay, 24 hours a day
- British sign language (BSL): Use signvideo.co.uk/nhs111
- Help in other languages: Call 111 and ask for an interpreter



Waiting for a call from a 111 nurse?

- Depending on your symptoms you may have been offered a call back from a nurse. You cannot request one. The time you will wait is based on the symptoms you told 111 about.
- If your symptoms get worse while you are waiting call 111 for children under 5. Anyone over the age of 5 can check their symptoms online or call 111. If you have signs of a life-threatening illness or have tried to end your life, call 999 immediately.
- A nurse will try and call you three times. If they cannot contact you they will leave a message, but you will not be able to call them back. You will have to use 111 online or call 111 again and start from the beginning.



Key messages:

- Measles cases are rising in London and urgent action is needed to prevent children becoming seriously unwell
 - Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people.
 - Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent it.
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- Check if you or your child has measles - Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash a few days later. Some people may also get small spots in their mouth.
 - The first symptoms of measles include: a high temperature; a runny or blocked nose; sneezing; a cough; red, sore, watery eyes.
 - Small white spots may appear inside the cheeks and on the back of the lips a few days later. These spots usually last a few days.
 - A rash usually appears a few days after the cold-like symptoms. The rash starts on the face and behind the ears. It then spreads all over the body. The spots of the measles rash are sometimes raised and often join together to form blotchy patches. They are not usually itchy. The rash looks brown or red on white skin. It may be more difficult to see on brown or black skin. (Picture below)

Find out more about measles:

[Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Measles :: Healthier Together \(what0-18.nhs.uk\)](https://what0-18.nhs.uk)



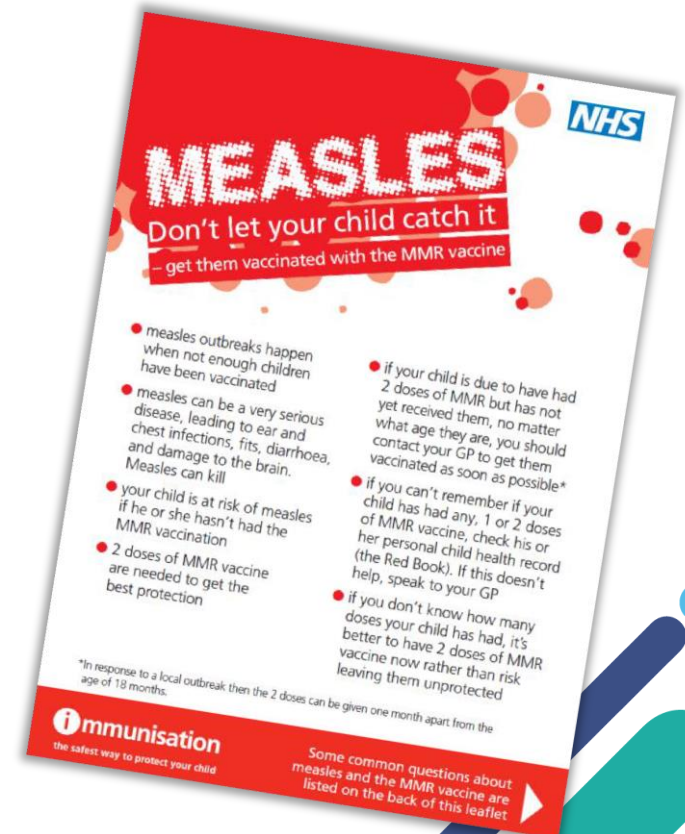
Key messages:

- The MMR vaccine is a safe and effective combined vaccine, protecting against measles, mumps, and rubella.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect your child.
- 2 doses of the MMR vaccine provides the best protection against measles, mumps and rubella.

- It is given as 2 doses – the 1st dose is given when babies are 1 year old and the 2nd dose at 3 years and 4 months of age.
- However, anyone can catch up on missed doses and it's never too late to protect yourself
- If you have any questions about vaccinations, or if you're not sure whether you've missed doses, ask the practice nurse at your GP surgery for advice today.

How can children get vaccinated?

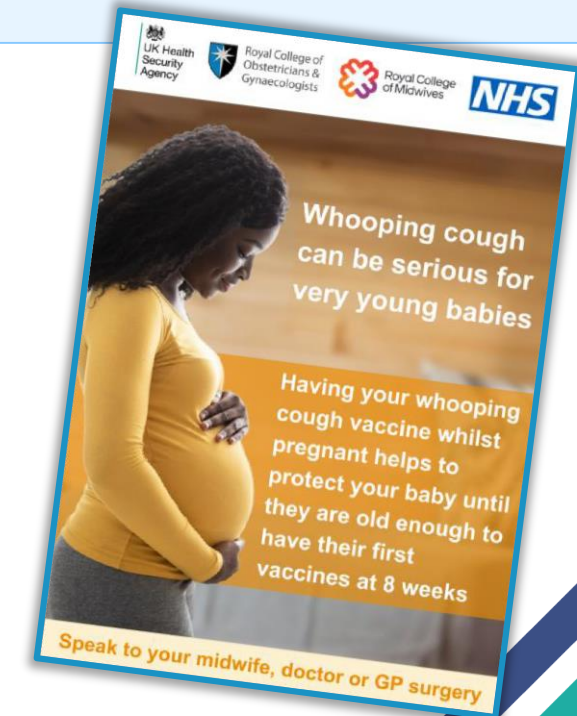
- All children at primary school who have missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine are being offered the opportunity to get up to date at school.
- Parents of children aged 1-4 years old or those who are home-schooled can make an appointment with their GP practice or visit a community clinic.
- Parents of school aged children, 4-11 years old, will be contacted by the NHS school immunisation service.



Whooping cough

Key messages:

- Whooping cough (pertussis) can be very serious for young babies who are too young to start their routine childhood vaccinations.
 - Babies with whooping cough are often very unwell, and many are likely to need hospital treatment as it can lead to pneumonia and permanent brain damage.
 - Getting vaccinated whilst pregnant is highly effective in protecting your baby from developing whooping cough in the first few weeks of their life.
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- If you are pregnant, you can help protect your baby by getting vaccinated – ideally from 16 weeks up to 32 weeks pregnant. If for any reason you miss having the vaccine, you can still have it up until the end of pregnancy.
 - The immunity you get from the vaccine passes to your baby through the placenta and protects them until they are old enough to be vaccinated at 8 weeks old.



NHS 10 year engagement plan

Key messages:

- The NHS are engaging on their 10 year plan and asking for your views and experiences on the NHS
- People can submit their ideas and feedback through the online platform at change.nhs.uk
- There will be events for people to join.
- [Start here to share your views](#) and [Public responses](#)
- [Organisational responses](#) – deadline 2 December, 5pm
- [Ideas for change](#)



SCAN ME



6. Other information

Additional support this winter

Please find below links for cost-of-living support for each borough:

Sutton: [Cost of living support - sutton.gov.uk](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Merton: [Cost-of-living support - Merton Council](https://www.merton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Croydon: [Cost of Living Support - Croydon Council](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Wandsworth: <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/cost-of-living-hub/>

Kingston: [Cost of Living Support – www.kingston.gov.uk](https://www.kingston.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Richmond: [Local support and advice - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/local-support-and-advice)



Samaritans

[116 123](tel:116123)

Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.



NHS 111

111

Non-emergency medical help and advice for people in England.



Money Helper

[0800 138 7777](tel:08001387777)

Provides free and impartial money advice.



Shout

[85258](tel:85258) (text SHOUT)

Confidential [24/7 text service](#) offering support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.



The Silver Line

[0800 4 70 80 90](tel:08004708090)

Provides support, information, friendship and advice for older people (over 55) who may feel lonely or isolated.



Stand Alone

standalone.org.uk

Charity supporting adults who are estranged (not in contact) from their family.



Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

[0300 111 5065](tel:03001115065)

uk-sobs.org.uk

Emotional and practical support and local groups for anyone bereaved or affected by suicide.



Switchboard

[0300 330 0630](tel:03003300630)

switchboard.lgbt

Listening services, information and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.



The Trussell Trust

trusselltrust.org

Emergency food and support for people in need. Includes a searchable list of local foodbanks.



Papyrus

Our advisers are all trained to help you focus on staying safe from suicide. For under 35s.

Call 0800 068 41 41 – 9am to midnight every day

Text 07860 039967

Email pat@papyrus-uk.org