

Big facts!



MEASLES

- 1** Measles is caused by a virus and is one of the most infectious diseases known.
- 2** It is spread through the air – on tiny droplets of moisture that are expelled when someone coughs or sneezes and these droplets are breathed in by someone else.
- 3** If your child is unprotected, the chances are he or she will catch measles if they come into contact with an infectious child.
- 4** Nearly everyone who catches measles will have a high fever, a rash and be unwell.
- 5** A child infected with measles virus will not usually show any symptoms for about the first 10 to 12 days – the incubation period. The first symptom is usually a fever that lasts between one and seven days.
- 6** The rash can appear as early as seven days after infection and up to 18 days after infection, but usually it appears around 14 days after. It lasts for five or six days and then fades.
- 7** An infected person remains contagious from the appearance of the first symptoms to about three or four days after the rash appears.
- 8** Children with measles have to spend about five days in bed and may be off school for ten days.
- 9** Adults are likely to suffer more complications and be ill for longer than children.
- 10** The complications of measles include chest infections, fits, swelling of the brain and brain damage.
- 11** Measles can kill.
- 12** Measles can be prevented by vaccination with the MMR vaccine, ideally at 13 months of age, with a second dose around three years and four months.
- 13** For unimmunised children over 13 months but under 18 months of age, MMR should be given in two doses at least three months apart. For those over 18 months of age, the two doses can be as close as one month apart, but ideally three months.
- 14** The MMR vaccine has been licensed in the USA for over 45 years and it has been used in the UK since 1988.
- 15** More than 500 million doses have been given in over 100 countries worldwide.
- 16** The MMR vaccine is as safe as any vaccine can be and it's never too late to get your child vaccinated.