Heads up from Health Protection - April 2025

This months edition includes:-

- ***Starting school protected***
- ***Springtime COVID-19 Protection***
- ***Ticks***
- ***Travel Vaccinations***

Is your child starting primary school in Sept 2025?

If your child is starting school this September, parents & guardians are urged to ensure their children have the best start to their school journey by being up to date with their pre-school vaccinations to safeguard their health, and their schoolmates from contracting dangerous but preventable illnesses. Before starting school, children should have received the 4-in-1 pre-school booster vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio, as well as the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

Timely vaccination is important for optimal protection as it boosts children's antibodies helping them fight off serious diseases and stay protected. Most children receive these vaccines around the age of three years and four months, but some children about to start school have not yet been vaccinated. This increases the risk of children contracting these diseases and experiencing severe symptoms.

As measles cases are rising in the North-West, NHS England recommend that as children start school, they should have had two doses of the MMR vaccine to ensure they are fully protected, as the complications of measles can be severe and life changing, they will also be protected against mumps and rubella (german measles), which can also be serious illnesses.

It's never too late to get your children vaccinated, parents should check their child's Red Book (personal child health record) or speak to their GP surgery to confirm their vaccination status and book in any missed vaccines.

Please scan the QR code below for further information on the MMR vaccine.

Don't forget that washing hands and using tissues when coughing and sneezing are an additional and effective way to help reduce the spread of germs

Springtime COVID-19 Protection

Now we are in Spring, protection from earlier COVID-19 vaccinations will be starting to wane. COVID-19 can still be dangerous and even life threatening for older people and those with weakened immune systems. Thankfully the NHS is offering a free vaccination to protect you, if you are

- aged 75 and over
- resident in a care homes for older adults
- aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system (please check your eligibility by clicking here)

the National booking system is open to book appointments online. Its important that everyone who is eligible takes up the offer of this spring booster before the vaccination programme closes on 17th June 2025

Ticks and Lyme disease

Ticks are small, spider-like creatures, usually between 1mm to 1cm long with 6 or 8 legs and are found in many outdoor environments but are particularly common in woodland or grassy areas.

Whilst ticks are most active in Spring and Summer, particularly March, April and June they can be found all year. Ticks can carry and spread a bacterial infection, called Lyme disease to humans, this is usually identified by a circular or oval red rash which usually develops within a few weeks or can take a few months.

Other symptoms include

- High temperature, feeling hot and shivery;

- Headache;
- Muscle and joint pain and tiredness.

What YOU can do to keep safe and help prevent infection

- Cover your skin while walking outdoors and tuck your trousers into your socks.
- Use insect repellent on your clothes and skin – products containing DEET are best. (DEET is the most common active ingredient in insect repellents).
- Stay on clear paths whenever possible and avoid brushing against vegetation.
- Wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to see and brush off.

Not all ticks carry Lyme disease but after spending time outside, it's very important to check yourself and others, including clothing and pets, for ticks and to **safely** remove them as soon as possible if you find one on your skin.

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick-removal tool. You can buy these from some pharmacies, vets, and pet shops.
2. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible

3. Slowly pull upwards, taking care not to squeeze or crush the tick. Dispose of it when you have removed it.
4. Clean the bite with antiseptic or soap and water.

Travel Vaccinations

Don't let illness spoil your adventure!

Planning your dream getaway? Ensure your trip is smooth and worry-free by getting your travel vaccinations. While you're exploring new destinations, remember that some countries might not have the same vaccination coverage as the UK. Protect yourself and enjoy every moment of your holiday without the fear of getting sick.

You can find out which vaccinations are necessary or recommended for the areas you'll be visiting please click the link below

- Travel Health Pro

Some countries require proof of vaccination (for example, for polio or yellow fever vaccination), which must be documented on an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) before you enter or when you leave a country.

When should I start thinking about the vaccines I need?

If possible, see the GP or a private travel clinic ***at least 6 to 8 weeks before you're due to travel***.

Some vaccines need to be given well in advance to allow your body to develop immunity.

And some vaccines involve a number of doses spread over several weeks or months.

You may be more at risk of some diseases, for example, if you're:

- travelling in rural areas
- backpacking
- staying in hostels or camping
- on a long trip rather than a package holiday

If you have a pre-existing health problem, this may make you more at risk of infection or complications from a travel-related illness.

Which travel vaccines are free?

The following travel vaccines are available free on the NHS from your GP surgery:

- polio (given as a combined diphtheria/tetanus/polio jab)
- typhoid
- hepatitis A
- cholera

These vaccines are free because they protect against diseases thought to represent the greatest risk to public health if they were brought into the country.

Get advice and warnings about travel abroad, including entry requirements, safety and security, health risks and legal differences

Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK

Meet the team

1 - image designed by AI copilot

The Health Protection Team are getting out and about, speaking to local residents to raise awareness on the national screening and vaccination programmes available.

In May, we'll be at...

Lowther Gardens, Lytham on Wednesday 28th May, from 10 - 3pm

Leyland Library on Monday 12th May, from 10 - 2pm

Come along and say hello!

In next months edition:-

- Giant Hogweed
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening (AAA)
- Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV)

Sources and further information

‘Be tick aware’ toolkit

Tick awareness A5 leaflet download link

What is Lyme disease and why do we need to be tick-aware? – UK Health Security Agency (blog.gov.uk)

Travel vaccination advice - NHS

This information has been produced by the Heath Protection team at Lancashire County Council

If you require a printable version of this Health Protection bulletin please email the team at healthprotection@lancashire.gov.uk

(Information correct at March 2025)