Skeltons Chemists

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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm
Saturday - 8.30am - 1pm
Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for September 2025

1. Why are vaccines important?
2. What diseases do they protect against?
3. What happens if people stop having vaccines?
4. Why are measles and mumps starting to appear in England?
5. What percentage of children need to be vaccinated with the MMR to stop measles spreading completely?
6. How do vaccines work?
7. Are vaccines safe?
8. Who cannot have vaccines?
9. What side effects are there?
10. What's in a vaccine?

Answers on the bottom of P2

Why are vaccines important?

Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases but beware of anti-vaccine stories which are spread online through social media and off-line. This information may not be based on scientific evidence and could put your child at risk of a serious illness. All the current evidence tells us that getting vaccinated is safer than not getting vaccinated.

However, if people stop having vaccines, it's possible for infectious diseases to quickly spread again. Measles and mumps are starting to appear again in England, even though the MMR vaccine is the best protection against both diseases.

This is serious, as measles can lead to life-threatening complications and mumps can cause hearing loss. If 95% of children receive the MMR vaccine, this would stop measles spreading completely. However, measles, mumps and rubella can quickly spread again if fewer than 90% of people are vaccinated. Since vaccines were introduced into the UK diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people have gone away or are very rarely seen.

How vaccines work

Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases. It's much safer to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and treating them. Once your immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can give you

lifelong protection.
Having a vaccine also benefits your whole community through “herd immunity”. If enough people are vaccinated, it’s harder for the disease spread to those people who cannot have vaccines i.e. people who are ill, have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine or have a weakened immune system.

How safe are vaccines?

All vaccines are thoroughly tested to make sure they will not harm you or your child. It often takes many years for a vaccine to make it through the trials and tests it needs to pass for approval.
Once a vaccine is being used in the UK it’s monitored for any rare side effects by the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). It is also carefully monitored to make sure it still works. Anyone can report a suspected side effect of a vaccination to the MHRA through the yellow card scheme.

What are the side effects of vaccination?

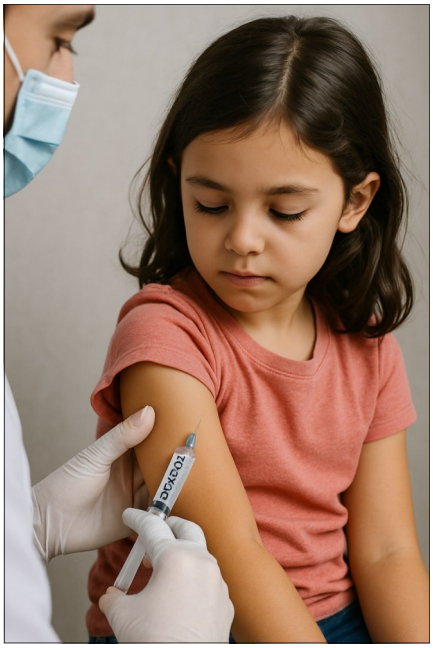
Most of the side effects are mild and do not last long. The most common ones include:

- The area where the needle goes in looking red, swollen and feeling a bit sore for 2-3 days
- Feeling a bit unwell or developing a high temperature for 1-2 days
- Older children and adults may feel faint
- Feeling tired, having a headache, mild fever or flu-like symptoms.

Some children might also cry and be upset immediately after the injection. This is normal and they should feel better after a cuddle.
Common side effects usually pass after a few days.

What’s in a vaccine?

Most vaccines contain a small amount of bacteria, virus or toxin that has been weakened or destroyed in a laboratory first. Some contain chemicals that make your body think it’s coming into contact with bacteria, virus or toxin. This means there’s a very low risk of healthy people catching a disease from a vaccine. It’s also why you might see vaccines being called “live” or “non-live”.
Differences between live and non-live vaccine:
Live (weakened) vaccines contain viruses or bacteria that have been weakened, cannot be given to people with a weakened immune system and give long term protection.



Non-live (destroyed) vaccine contain viruses or bacteria that have been destroyed, can be given to people with a weakened immune system and often needs several doses or a booster vaccine for full protection.

For more information on this or any other health concern you may have, talk to one of our trained team

Answers: Q1, They are the best thing we can do to protect ourselves against ill health. Q2, Since vaccines were introduced into the UK diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people have gone away or are very rarely seen. Q3, It’s possible infectious diseases will quickly spread. Q4, Because less children are getting the MMR vaccination. Q5, 95%. Q6, Vaccines teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases. Q7, All vaccines are thoroughly tested to make sure they will not harm you or your child. Q8, People who’ve had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of vaccine, people with a weakened immune system. Q9, The most common side effects include: the injection site feeling a bit sore for 2-3 days, feeling a bit unwell or having a high temperature for 1-2 days, older children and adults may feel faint, feeling tired, having a headache, mild fever or flu-like symptoms. Q10, Most vaccines contain a small amount of bacteria, virus or toxin that’s been weakened or destroyed in a laboratory first.