

Parents & Carers

My Ref:
Your Ref: DSA/PN/da
Date: 30th June 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

The UK Health Security Agency [UKHSA] has an ongoing programme of monitoring sewage [wastewater] for potential infectious threats to health in England. One of the London sampling sites has detected the Polio virus on a number of occasions and this has resulted in a National Alert, which has been reported in the mainstream media.

What is “Polio”

“Poliomyelitis” is a virus which can cause mild symptoms such as headache, stomach upset and exhaustion but can also cause severe symptoms such as stiffness of the neck / back, fever, meningitis, or paralysis.

Transmission is through contact with poo of an infected person or when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Therefore, respiratory hygiene is important as is hand washing and cleaning.

The incubation period ranges from 3 to 21 days. Polio virus hangs around in people for longer than most viruses and it can be excreted for three to six weeks.

Vaccination is very effective in preventing infection and transmission and has been used in the UK for 70 years.

What is the National Alert doing?

Primary and Acute NHS providers have been alerted to be on the look-out for potential symptoms of the illness and parents of children *known* to be unvaccinated will be contacted to arrange for them to update their child’s level of protection.

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 If you need this document in another language or format contact the service using the details above.

What do we need to do? Make sure you and your family are vaccinated.

1. Check that you and your family (both adults and children) have received vaccination. This are offered as a baby, before children start school and at 14 years of age.
2. If you have not been vaccinated, contact your GP to receive vaccination.
3. Ensure your child receives *all* their recommended protective vaccinations. If you are traveling to a part of the world where polio may be endemic, then make sure you have an up to date booster.

The uptake of the three polio vaccine shots in the first year of life in the UK is good but lower in Enfield for pre-schoolers and teenagers.

Yours faithfully



Dudu Sher-Arami
Director of Public Health
London Borough of Enfield



Peter Nathan
Director of Education
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