

'Immunise, protect, thrive' Living Well Campaign goes live

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02 February 2026

3 minutes



A new campaign – 'immunise, protect, thrive' – focussing on the importance of childhood immunisations has been launched in community pharmacies across Northern Ireland.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination and highlight that it is the most important thing you can do to protect your child from ill health.

The campaign will run during February and March 2026 and supports the new vaccination schedule changes which commenced on 1 January 2026.

Living Well is offered in over 500 pharmacies across Northern Ireland and provides information and advice on public health issues. It is delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA), Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI), and the Department of Health (DoH).

Geraldine Mallon, Immunisation Project Operations Manager at the PHA, said: “After clean water, vaccination is the most effective public health intervention in the world for saving lives, promoting good health and preventing serious illness.

“During 2024 and 2025, Northern Ireland saw the return of measles cases, increasing the risk of serious infection for children who had missed their vaccines.

Other serious childhood infectious diseases such as polio or diphtheria may rarely be heard of these days. However, they can return from parts of the world where they still occur if vaccination rates continue to decrease as they have been over the last few years.

“It is really important vaccine uptake remains high in Northern Ireland to help prevent many of these serious diseases returning. If this happens, children who are not vaccinated will be at risk of these infections and potentially life-changing complications – even death.”

The PHA strongly recommends babies and children receive all their vaccinations according to the routine childhood immunisation schedule, which has recently been updated to adjust the timing of vaccines for the best protection. In addition, the schedule has been enhanced with the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, now available in the form of the combined vaccine for measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV).

This will be the first time in Northern Ireland that children will be offered protection against chickenpox for free through the childhood programme. Immunisation is the safest and most effective way of helping to protect our children against serious diseases.

Siobhan McNulty, Community Pharmacist and owner of Melvin Pharmacy in Garrison, Co Fermanagh, said: “Community pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals and can provide information, advice and reassurance to parents and guardians on childhood immunisation. Often the first point of contact for many families’ healthcare needs, community pharmacists are ideally positioned to highlight the important role vaccinations play in protecting our children and to also dispel myths and misconceptions regarding immunisations.”

As with other childhood immunisations, parents will be contacted by their GP surgery to arrange an appointment if their child is eligible.

If you are unsure if your child is up to date with vaccinations, the easiest way to check is to look at your child's red book or speak to your health visitor or GP surgery.

If your child has missed a vaccination, please contact your GP practice to book an appointment as soon as you can to make sure they have maximum protection against disease.

For more information on childhood immunisations and eligibility for the MMRV see www.nidirect.gov.uk/childhood-immunisation

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