

Thousands of measles cases reported after outbreaks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv

Members of a UK Strictly Orthodox community, who were not immunised, also reported to have caught the disease while visiting Israel.

The measles-rubella vaccine has been rejected by some parents (*Photo: Getty Images*)

A major outbreak of measles in Israel has caused one death and over a thousand cases in the last eight months, officials have revealed.

A majority of the cases were recorded in Jerusalem, including that of an 18-month-old girl who was brought last Thursday by ambulance to Shaarei Tzedek hospital without a pulse and not breathing. The doctors failed to save her life.

It was the first case of a child dying from measles in Israel since 1990. The child belonged to a Charedi sect in Jerusalem which for religious reasons do not record births of their children with any government ministry, including the health authorities, meaning they are not routinely inoculated.

Israeli children are usually inoculated for measles twice, at the age of one and then again after starting school at six. Cases have been rare in recent decades, although there were small-scale outbreaks in 2007 and 2015.

This time, however, there have been some 1,300 cases, of which over half were in the Jerusalem area.

Most Charedi rabbis are clear on the need to be inoculated but the few small groups who object appear to be the source of the latest cases in Jerusalem.

A measles outbreak in Stamford Hill, North London, has been traced to residents who caught the disease during a recent visit to Israel.

But the Israeli outbreak is not confined to the Strictly Orthodox community and there have been nearly a hundred cases in Tel Aviv alone. Doctors ascribe these to a small but persistent trend among secular parents who oppose giving their children the MMRV vaccine because of widely discredited online articles linking the vaccine to autism.

Israel's Health Ministry began a nationwide drive this week in hospitals and family health clinics to inoculate all children.

Source: <https://www.thejc.com/news/israel/thousands-of-measles-cases-reported-after-outbreaks-in-jerusalem-and-tel-aviv-stamford-hill-1.472117>

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