

Nikki's Story

Nikki was five when she got measles. She was the fifth child in her class to get it that week. It started with a hard dry cough and watery eyes. Her mum thought it was just a cold at first until she talked to some of the other mums and heard that there was an outbreak of measles in the class.

Mum told Nikki to stay indoors so she would not pass it on to other children. That night Nikki woke up with a nightmare. She was so hot that her Mum had to sponge her down with water to cool her. The next day spots began to appear. The first ones were at the back of her neck. Soon they spread right across her tummy and down to her feet. There were spots inside her mouth too and she couldn't eat. Nikki felt miserable.

The doctor called later that day and he told Nikki that she definitely had measles. He told her to rest and not to go out to play for a week. Nikki wanted a medicine to cure the measles but the doctor said that there was none. The measles would just go away after a week. He gave her mum a prescription for a cough medicine.

The rest of that week was terrible. Nikki's body felt sore and itchy and she was very cranky. She was angry that she had to stay indoors, and wasn't allowed to hold her little brother. She didn't want to eat or drink, but her Mum spent lots of time trying to coax her into taking little glasses of water.

All the time her Mum worried that her little brother, Samuel, would get the measles too. Luckily he didn't.

Towards the end of the week, Nikki began to feel better and the spots began to away. Her cough stopped too. She was able to go out to play. A few days later she returned to school, but six children were still off sick in her class.

Now Nikki is a Mum and has children of her own. She knows the importance of giving children vaccines for infectious diseases. She was able to bring each of her children to the doctor when they were the right age to get a vaccination for the measles and mumps, and other childhood illnesses. Hopefully she will never have to worry about her children getting these diseases and being sick for a long time. She explained it all to her daughter Cora: 'I wish they had that

vaccine when I was a baby. I remember clearly that the measles were really terrible.'