

Measles (Rubeola)

What is Measles?

Measles (also known as rubeola) is a respiratory disease caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms?

- Increasing fever (can be extremely high and persistent)
- Cough, runny nose, sore throat
- Redness of the eyes
- Rash (blotchy, usually starts on the head and spreads to the rest of the body).
- Tiny white spots with bluish-white centers found inside the mouth (Koplik's spots)

Symptoms of measles generally begin about 14 (range 7-18 days) days after a person is exposed.

How is it spread?

It is spread by air from person to person when infected people cough, sneeze or talk. Measles is more easily spread than almost any other disease; anyone who is exposed and not immune will probably get the disease.

Who is most at risk?

Measles is most dangerous for children under 5 years of age, adults over 20 years of age, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.

What are some of the complications associated with measles?

- Pneumonia
- Diarrhea
- Ear infections
- Inflammation of the brain
- Deafness, blindness
- Pregnancy problems

How long is a person contagious?

People are contagious 1-2 days before onset of symptoms (3-5 days before the rash) to 4 days after the appearance of the rash.

How is the disease diagnosed?

Because measles can look like other diseases that cause a rash, the only sure way to know if you have measles is to get a blood test. Sometimes throat and urine tests will also be done.

How treated?

There is no specific treatment for measles.

Is there a vaccine available?

There are two combination vaccines used to prevent measles: measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccine.

The current recommendation is a two-dose schedule. The first dose should be given at 12 to 15 months of age, the second at school entry (4 to 6 years of age.)

Unimmunized adults born in or after 1957 should also receive the vaccine if they have not had measles.

What should I do if I am exposed to measles?

If you have not been vaccinated, or had measles, contact your health care provider immediately. Your doctor may recommend you get vaccinated or receive immune globulin that might prevent or modify measles.

How can I prevent the spread of measles?

- The best way to prevent measles is through immunization.
- Persons with measles must stay home and away from others.

For further information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/>

**Promptly report measles cases to
Saint Louis County Department of Health by
calling
314 615 1630**