

Measles



Measles is a very contagious respiratory infection. It's caused by a virus. It usually spreads when a person comes in contact with droplets from coughs or sneezes of someone with the virus. Direct contact with fluids from the nose or mouth of an infected person can also spread the virus. The symptoms of measles happen about 8 to 12 days after coming in contact with a person with the virus.

Who is at risk for measles?

Those most at risk for measles are:

- Children and adults who never had the measles vaccine
- Infants too young to get the vaccine (under 1 year of age)
- People with weak immune systems, even if they've been vaccinated against measles
- Adults born in 1957 or later who are not known to be immune to measles

What are the symptoms of measles?

Early symptoms of measles include:

- Runny nose
- Cough
- Inflamed and red eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Fever
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth

The red spots of the measles rash appear 2 to 4 days later. The rash often starts on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body.

How is measles diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider can often diagnose measles based on the signs and symptoms. Lab tests are used to confirm the diagnosis.

How is measles treated?

Vitamin A is used to treat measles in children. It lessens the chance of serious complications and death. Other treatment includes:

- Keeping your child away from other people
- Medicine for fever
- Antibiotics for bacterial infections if they develop
- Hospitalization if complications develop

What are possible complications of measles?

Most children recover with no lasting effects. But measles can lead to serious complications or even death. Complications of measles can include:

- Middle ear infection
- Infection of the lungs (pneumonia)
- Infection of the upper airway with trouble breathing and cough (croup)
- Diarrhea
- Infection of the brain (encephalitis)

How can measles be prevented?



The measles vaccine is part of the routine immunizations advised for children. Children should be vaccinated for measles with 2 doses:

- First dose at 12 to 15 months of age
- Second dose at 4 to 6 years of age

For those who have not been vaccinated, vaccination up to 3 days after exposure to measles may prevent or decrease the severity of the disease.

When to call the healthcare provider

Call your child's healthcare provider right away if you suspect measles.

Call 911 if your child has:

- A fever higher than 105°F (40.5°C)
- Trouble breathing

- A severe headache
- Confusion or clumsiness

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