

MEASLES FACT SHEET

What is measles?

Measles (rubeola) is an extremely contagious disease caused by the measles virus. It can cause complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). It can also cause miscarriages or premature delivery in pregnant women.

What are the symptoms?

- High fever
- Slight sensitivity to light
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes

Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth.

Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out

How can it be prevented?

- **Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles**
- Teenagers and adults who do not know if they are protected against measles should ask their health care provider about the **MMR** vaccine
- **Pregnant women should NOT receive the live vaccine and ALL women of childbearing age should avoid anyone with measles**

More information: www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index.html

How can it be spread?

- When an infected person sneezes or coughs in the air of another person
- Measles can be airborne; droplets can remain in the air and be infectious for 2 hours. If infected air is inhaled, a person can become sick.
- The risk of measles is highest during late winter and early spring
- **A person is contagious for 4 days BEFORE and 4 days AFTER the rash forms**

How is it treated?

- No specific medicine for measles
- Getting plenty of rest, fluids
- Non-aspirin products (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) can be used to reduce fever and discomfort

Aspirin should NOT be used in children with viral illnesses since there have been cases associated with the development of Reye's Syndrome

