

MEASLES FACT SHEET

What is measles?

Measles (rubeola) is an extremely contagious disease caused by the measles virus. Complications are more common in unvaccinated individuals and can include pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). It can also cause miscarriages or premature delivery in unvaccinated pregnant women.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth (2-3 days after symptoms begin)
- Rash (3-5 days after symptoms begin)

How can it be prevented?

- **Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles.**
- Individuals 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.**

How is it spread?

- By breathing the air in a room after an infected person coughs or sneezes
- By touching something with droplets from a cough or sneeze on it and then touching your mouth or nose

Measles can be airborne; the virus can remain in the air and be infectious for 2 hours. If infected air is inhaled, a person can become sick.

A person is contagious for 4 days BEFORE through 4 days AFTER the rash forms.

The risk of measles is highest during late winter and early spring.

How is it treated?

- By getting plenty of rest
- By drinking plenty of fluids
- By using non-aspirin products (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) to reduce fever and discomfort. **ASPIRIN SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN unless specifically directed by their healthcare provider.**

There is no specific medication for measles. If complications develop, contact your health care provider.

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

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

2/2023

