



Measles

Fact Sheet

What is measles?

Measles is an acute, highly communicable viral disease.

Who gets measles?

Anyone, regardless of age, who has not had measles or has not been successfully immunized, may get the disease.

How can measles be prevented?

Persons not immune to measles should receive 2 doses of measles containing vaccine.

How is measles spread?

Measles is spread through the air by droplets from the nose, throat, and mouth of an infected person.

How soon do infected people get sick?

The average incubation period for measles from exposure to initial symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, watery eyes, runny nose) is about 10-12 days. Rash onset averages 14 days (range 7-21 days) after exposure.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles causes a high fever, cough, runny nose, watery eyes, and a red rash that begins on the face along the hairline and behind the ears. The rash rapidly spreads downward to the chest and back and finally, to the thighs and feet.

How long is an infected person able to spread measles?

An infected person is able to spread measles from 4 days before the rash starts to 4 days after the rash appears.

What should you do if you think you may be infected?

Call your healthcare provider and discuss your symptoms and any possible exposure before showing up at the clinic. The physician will advise you to either come to the clinic or arrange for you to be seen at a different location so other people are not exposed.

Can a person get measles again?

No. Immunity after illness is permanent.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no specific treatment for measles. Complications should be managed by a healthcare provider.

Should people who have been around a person infected with measles be treated?

Vaccine must be given within 72 hours after last exposure or Immune globulin within 6 days after last exposure to prevent illness.