



Measles Fact Sheet



Public Health

What is measles and how does it spread?

- Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads by direct contact with droplets or in the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.
- Measles is so contagious that 90% of people who are not immune and are exposed will become infected.
- Measles virus can stay in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area.
- Infected people can spread measles from four days before through four days after the rash appears.

What are the symptoms?

- Measles symptoms usually begin 7 to 14 days after exposure, but can appear up to 21 days after.
- Symptoms typically start with fevers, runny nose, cough, and red eyes.
- Tiny white spots in the mouth may appear 2-3 days after symptoms begin.
- Rash that is red, raised, blotchy, usually starts on the face and spreads to body three to five days after symptoms begin.

Contact your doctor immediately if you think you or your child have been exposed to measles. Call them before seeking care so steps can be taken to prevent exposure to other people.

Measles is a serious disease that can lead to complications and death.

About 1 in 5 in the U.S. who get measles is hospitalized. Serious complications include lung infections (pneumonia) and brain swelling (encephalitis), hospitalization and death.

Measles during pregnancy can lead to miscarriages and premature births.

Measles is Preventable.

Check now if you and your family are fully protected against measles.

Especially before travel.

- The best way to prevent measles is through measles (MMR) vaccination.
- MMR is highly effective, very safe, and provides long-lasting protection. Two doses are needed for full protection and are 97% effective at preventing measles.
 - Children should receive two doses; at 12-15 months and at 4-6 years.
 - Children 1-4 years who have not received 1 dose AND school-aged children who have not received 2 doses should get vaccinated as soon as possible.
 - Adults should have two doses unless otherwise immune.
- If you are unsure of your vaccine status check with your healthcare provider.