



Measles (Rubeola)



What is Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can lead to serious health complications like lung infection, brain damage, deafness, hospitalizations and death. Measles is especially serious for young children, older adults, pregnant people and those with weakened immune systems.

How is Measles spread?

Measles is spread through the air by an infected person breathing, coughing or sneezing. Respiratory droplets can get into people's noses or throats when they breathe or by putting their fingers in their mouth after touching an infected surface. If one person has the measles, up to 9 out of 10 people nearby will become infected if they are not protected (had the measles or vaccinated). Measles can live for up to 2 hours in an airspace after an infected person leaves an area.

Symptoms of Measles:

Symptoms of measles can appear 7-21 days (average 10-12 days) after a person is infected, and include:

- Fever
- Blotchy rash
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Feeling run down, achy
- Tiny white spots with bluish-white centers (Koplik spots) found inside the mouth

A child diagnosed with measles should be excluded from school for at least four days after the appearance of the rash.

How is Measles treated?

Treatment of measles is symptomatic, see a physician for treatment of measles symptoms:

- Relieve itching
- Control fever
- Maintain rest
- Protect eyes from strong or direct light
- Encourage fluid intake


How can Measles be prevented?

- Measles is a vaccine preventable disease.
- In Michigan, all children entering school must have two doses of Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine given at the recommended intervals.
- Everyone should be up to date on MMR vaccine. To check your vaccination status or to get vaccinated, talk with your health care provider or call your local health department.

A typical case of measles begins with mild to moderate fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and sore throat. Two to five days after symptoms begin, Koplik Spots may appear inside the mouth and a red or reddish-brown rash appears. The rash usually begins on a person's face at the hairline and spreads downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. When the rash appears, a person's fever may spike to more than 104 degrees Fahrenheit. After a few days, the fever subsides and the rash fades.

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CDC Public Information 
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