

# MEASLES

## What is Measles?

Measles is a serious viral respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) that causes rash and fever. It is very contagious and in rare cases can be deadly. In children measles can be very dangerous leading to pneumonia, deafness, brain damage, and death.

## Transmission

Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes. It is very contagious through airborne particles, and you can catch measles by being in a room where a person with measles has been, up to two hours after that person is gone. You can catch measles from an infected person before they have the rash. Most people who have not had measles or the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine will get measles if exposed to the virus. If you have been diagnosed with measles, wear a mask to prevent spreading the virus.

## Symptoms

Measles virus starts with a fever that can be very high. Other symptoms may include: rash with small red spots covering head and rest of body, cough, runny nose, red eyes, diarrhea, ear infection.

## Diagnosis

Diagnosis is usually based on symptoms of fever, rash, and known or suspected exposure from an infected person. Laboratory testing of serum and throat swab can confirm the measles virus.

## Isolation

People infected with the measles virus must be isolated for 4 days after developing a rash. People who do not have immunity to measles from previous infection or vaccine, or exempt from the measles vaccine, should avoid affected outbreak areas or institutions until 21 days after the onset of rash in the last case of measles.

## Treatment

There is no specific medication or antiviral therapy for measles. Medical care includes treatment for symptom relief, reducing fever and rash. Fluids for rehydration. Antibiotics may be used if there are complications such as bacterial infections. In children with measles infection, Vitamin A is administered.

## Prevention

College students and health care workers are required to have 2 doses of MMR, or a recent lab test confirming immunity. International travelers are encouraged to make sure they've had two doses of the MMR vaccine. A single dose is not completely effective at preventing measles.

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University of Cincinnati requires students to have proof of immunizations or proof of immunity. Individuals who waive this requirement may be excluded from all campus activities including classes and dormitories during an outbreak.

- Make sure you are fully vaccinated or otherwise protected against measles.
- Children in the United States routinely receive measles vaccination at age 12-15 months.
- Children 12 months of age or older should have 2 doses, separated by at least 28 days.
- Adolescents and adults who have not had measles or have not been vaccinated should get 2 doses, separated by at least 28 days.
- Two doses of MMR vaccine are nearly 100% effective at preventing measles.
- The only measles vaccines available in the United States are the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) and the measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccines. MMR has been used safely and effectively since the 1970s. A few people experience mild, temporary, adverse reactions, such as joint pain, from the vaccine, but serious side effects are extremely rare. There is no link between MMR vaccine and autism.
- You should not get the MMR vaccine if you are pregnant or have an immune disorder. Check with your doctor.
- **IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE MEASLES OR MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO MEASLES, CALL US (513) 556-2564 RIGHT AWAY.**

Information provided by [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and [UpToDate](#).

## University of Cincinnati

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