

# Measles Fact Sheet

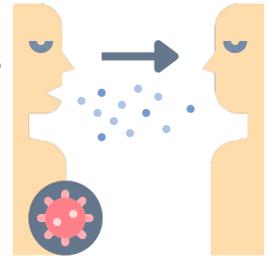
## What is it?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that causes a rash on the entire body. Measles infections can be serious and require hospitalization, especially for babies and young children. **About 1 in 5 unvaccinated individuals who get sick with measles will require hospitalization and around the clock care.** There is no treatment for measles. The virus has to run its course and the symptoms may be uncomfortable.



## How does it spread?

Measles is very contagious. It spreads through the air when a sick person breathes, coughs or sneezes, and by close contact with a sick person. **Measles is so contagious that a sick person can spread the virus to up to 90% of the people they come into contact with, even if they are not showing signs of being sick.**



## What are the symptoms?

A rash caused by measles commonly starts on the hairline or face and eventually travels down to the neck, stomach, arms, and legs. **The rash spots are small, red, and flat.** However, there are other signs as well. 7-14 days after being exposed to measles, other symptoms include:

- High fever (104° F / 40° C)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Koplik spots (tiny, white spots inside the mouth)



**Babies and young children are most at risk of serious complications.** The most common complication in children sick with measles is pneumonia, an infection in the lungs that makes it hard to breathe. Encephalitis, or brain swelling, can also occur and can lead to deafness, or hearing loss. **In some cases, children can die from measles.**



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## How can I protect my child?

Measles can be prevented with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. People who don't have their vaccines are more likely to get sick with measles. **The MMR vaccine has been carefully studied by scientists and is both safe and effective.** No studies have found a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

**Two (2) doses of the MMR vaccine are needed for the most protection.** The first dose is given at age 12-15 months, and the second dose is given at age 4-6 years. Check that your child is up to date on vaccinations, as **2 doses of the MMR vaccine is up to 97% effective in preventing measles.**

Measles was eliminated in the United States (U.S.) in 2000 because of the highly effective vaccines, but children can still get sick with measles in the U.S. **Measles is still common in other parts of the world and can be brought to the U.S. by unvaccinated travelers.** In 2015, there was an outbreak of measles in Anaheim, CA, and 125 people got sick. Even if your family is not traveling outside the U.S., it is still important to get the MMR vaccine.



The MMR vaccine is the only approved vaccine in the U.S. **If your child was born in another country, and vaccinated in that country, they will still need to get the MMR vaccine series approved in the U.S.** If your child was vaccinated in another country, review their vaccination records with a healthcare provider to make sure they meet U.S. requirements.

## When should I ask a doctor?

**Contact your doctor if your child starts to show signs of measles or has been around someone with measles.** Since measles can easily spread from person to person, your doctor will make special arrangements to evaluate your child. If your child does get sick with measles, they will need to be closely monitored by their doctor. **There is no treatment for measles; the virus needs to run its course which can be uncomfortable and take several weeks.** Your doctor can recommend treatments and remedies for measles and will likely recommend the sick child be in isolation. **Because measles is so contagious, do not leave your home and put others at risk until your doctor says it is safe to be in public.**

