



Measles Fact Sheet **(rubeola, red or hard measles)**

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious rash illness caused by a virus of the genus *Morbillivirus* in the *Paramyxovirus* family. Complications from measles such as ear infections, pneumonia, croup, encephalitis, seizures, and death can occur.

How do you get it?

Anyone who has not had measles previously or who has not received the vaccine can get measles. Direct exposure to secretions from the nose or throat of a person with the disease can cause measles. Transmission occurs when a person with measles coughs or sneezes and airborne droplets are in the air for another person to breathe. Airborne transmission can occur for up to 2 hours after a person with measles has been in a closed area. It spreads rapidly and easily.

What are the symptoms of measles?

The symptoms usually occur in 2 stages. The first stage commonly begins with a runny nose, red watery eyes, fever, and cough. A red blotchy rash appears in the second stage, starting on the face and spreading down the body to the arms and legs and usually lasts for about 4-6 days.

When do symptoms start?

The fever, runny nose, and cough usually appear 10 days after exposure, but can appear as late as 18 days after exposure. The rash appears 3 to 7 days after the onset of the first symptoms.

When and for how long is a person able to spread measles?

Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before through four days after the rash appears.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no specific treatment for measles. Rest and symptomatic treatment is best for uncomplicated cases.

Should a person with measles be excluded from work or school? Yes, for 4 days after the onset of the rash.

If you get measles once, can you get it again?

No. Adults born before 1957 are usually immune because they had measles as a child.

How can you keep from getting it?

Measles vaccine (in the form of MMR or MR or measles only vaccines) can prevent measles.