

LEARN ABOUT

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT MEASLES



This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

What is Measles?

Measles is a sickness caused by a germ (virus). It spreads very easily from person to person. Anyone can get measles if they are not protected. In rare cases, measles can be very serious.

How Does Measles Spread?

- Measles spreads when someone who has it coughs, sneezes, or breathes out tiny drops that have the germ.
- You can get sick by breathing in these drops or touching something with the germ and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The germ can stay in the air for up to two hours after the sick person leaves.
- People can spread measles four days before the rash shows and four days after the rash starts.

Signs and Symptoms of Measles

Measles symptoms usually start 7 to 14 days after being around someone who has measles. It often starts with a very high fever, cough, runny nose, and watery eyes. A rash usually appears 3 to 5 days after the first symptoms.

Common symptoms include:

- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red or watery eyes
- Ear infection
- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Diarrhea
- Rash of small red spots that start on the face and spread to the rest of the body

What to Do if You Have Symptoms

If you think you might have measles, you should:

- Call your doctor, clinic, or urgent care before going in so they can prepare and protect others.
- Stay home and away from other people except to get medical care.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid sharing drinks or eating utensils.
- Clean surfaces and items you touch often.