

Measles



What is it?

Measles is a serious, highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

Symptoms

It can take 7-21 days for symptoms to appear. The first symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Tiny white spots (Koplik's spots) in the mouth

At 3 to 5 days:

- A reddish rash appears, usually on the face at the hairline, and spreads to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet
- Fever may rise to more than 104 °F
- After a few days, the fever subsides and the rash fades

If you think you were exposed to measles and need healthcare, call ahead so measures can be taken to protect others.



When sick

- Stay home until at least 4 days after the rash starts and symptoms have improved
- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Manage fever
- Call your healthcare provider

How is measles spread?

- Through droplets when an infected person breathes, coughs, sneezes, or talks
- Droplets containing the virus can stay in the air for up to 2 hours
- A person can spread measles 4 days before and after the rash starts

Who is at risk for severe illness?

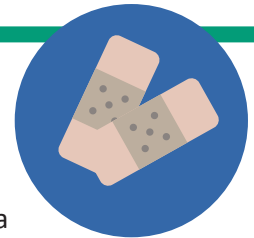
Some people are more at risk for severe illness than others, including:

- Infants
- People who are pregnant and not vaccinated
- People with compromised immune systems

There is a vaccine available for those who cannot be immunized through the traditional vaccine.

Ways to prevent measles

- Get vaccinated—the MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella
- Children should get 2 doses
- Adults born after Jan. 1, 1957, should get at least 1 dose of MMR if they have not had measles
- Getting vaccinated within 72 hours of exposure may protect unvaccinated people who were exposed to measles



Communicable Disease Investigation & Prevention
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Learn more
about measles

