



Measles

What is Measles (Rubeola)?

Measles (Rubeola) is a highly contagious viral infection. It is spread easily from person to person through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, red eyes, runny nose and eyes, cough, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and a red-brown, blotchy rash starting on the face and moving to the rest of the body. Most children with measles are quite ill but recover with no ill effects. However, some develop ear infections, pneumonia, croup, diarrhea, or encephalitis (brain swelling). Infants and adults often have the more serious cases.

How is it treated?

There is no medicine for the disease. Your health care provider may recommend medication to relieve the symptoms or to treat complications of measles. **Measles can be prevented by the MMR** (measles, mumps, rubella) **vaccine series**. North Carolina law requires children to receive two doses of measles-containing vaccine: dose one at 12 to 15 months of age and dose two (at least 30 days later) before kindergarten/first grade entry, between ages 4 years – 5 years of age.

If you plan to travel internationally with an infant **less than 12 months old**:

- Infants aged 6-11 months should receive one dose of the MMR vaccine before departure.
- If an infant aged 6-11 months received the MMR vaccine prior to travel, the infant still needs to complete the two-dose MMR series according to the recommended vaccination schedule.

Who should stay at home?

Individuals with measles should be kept from school/childcare and/or work for four days after the rash appears. They may need to stay out longer if they don't feel well and/or cannot participate in usual classroom or work activities.

Precautions

- Good hand washing practices.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing and then wash your hands.
- Use tissue one time and discard tissue in trash can.



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- Watch for symptoms of illness among staff, students, co-workers, and other family members.
- Get vaccinated if you are unvaccinated.
- Frequently disinfect toys, sinks, countertops, and tabletops at home with a solution recommended by the Division of Public Health to help prevent exposure to measles when these surfaces are contaminated.
- For healthcare facilities, workplaces, and hospitality establishments: to prevent or reduce patient, employee, and customer risk to measles virus exposure, take preventative measures to ensure that workplace surfaces that may be contaminated with body fluids are cleaned regularly with disinfectant. Generally, EPA-registered disinfectants suitable for Hepatitis B viruses and HIV will be effective against the measles virus. Commonly contaminated areas include water fountains, sinks, countertops, tabletops, tables, front desks, cabinets, chairs, door handles, telephones, faucet handles, restrooms, and equipment. In addition to the previous items, childcare workers should disinfect any toys or small objects that may be contaminated with a child's saliva or other body fluids.

If a case of measles occurs, staff should **immediately notify the Division of Public Health**. The Division of Public Health will decide if a special immunization program or other treatment is needed for those in close contact with the infected person. Also:

- Children and adults who are not immunized should be immunized or kept from school, childcare, or work until 21 days after the rash appears in the last case of measles in the facility.
- Closely observe all children for symptoms and refer anyone developing symptoms to their health care provider.
- Follow appropriate group separation practices in large facilities.

Special Note

Parents are advised to avoid the use of aspirin in children who have flu-like symptoms or chicken pox. Ask your health care provider about other medicines for fever or pain.

Free language assistance available upon request.