

MEASLES FACT SHEET

What is measles?

Measles is a serious and highly contagious disease caused by a virus.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Symptoms usually appear 10-12 days after being exposed to someone with measles, if you are not immune. These symptoms may include:

- Rash that starts on the face and neck, and then spreads downward
- High fever (101° or higher)
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Cough

Who can get measles?

Anyone can get measles who is not immune (anyone who has not had measles disease or measles vaccine). Measles usually occurs in preschool age children who haven't had their measles vaccine, or in school age children and young adults who have had only one shot of measles vaccine. Almost everyone born before 1957 has already had measles.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is really not any treatment to 'cure' measles. Supportive care, drinking a lot of fluids and rest are needed. Check with your health care provider for management of measles. Although most people recover completely, measles can cause complications. Persons with severe cases of measles may develop ear problems, diarrhea, pneumonia, brain infection, and even die. Infants and adults are usually sicker than children and teenagers.

How is measles spread?

Measles virus is spread easily:

- Through the air when someone with measles coughs or sneezes
- By direct contact with infected nose or throat secretions

How can measles be prevented?

Measles vaccine is recommended for children at 12 to 15 months of age. The vaccine is given as part of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. A second dose of measles vaccine, usually given as MMR vaccine, is required for all children at school entry. Anyone born after 1956 should get measles vaccine (or find out if they are immune) if they work in a setting where they may get exposed, such as health care settings and schools. Women should not get the vaccine if they are already pregnant or plan to get pregnant within 3 months after getting vaccinated.

What should be done if I think I have measles or someone I know has measles?

Call your local health department (in Contra Costa County, call **(925) 313-6740**) or your doctor if you think you have measles or have been exposed to someone with measles. The measles vaccine may prevent illness if you receive it within 3 days of contact with the measles virus and another medication (Immune Globulin) may prevent illness if you receive it within 6 days of contact with the measles virus. **Always call your doctor to say you or your child have a rash, before visiting the office so steps can be taken to prevent the spread of measles to other people.**

Contact Contra Costa Public Health at (925) 313-6740 or visit: www.cchealth.org or www.cdc.gov

