

FACT SHEET – MEASLES

Measles is also called rubeola, 10-day measles or red measles. It's not the same as German measles (rubella).

SYMPTOMS

The most common measles symptoms include:

A high fever	Red or bloodshot eyes
Tiredness	A runny nose
A barky cough	

A few days after these symptoms begin, you'll develop a red, blotchy rash that spreads from your face to the rest of your body. The rash itself lasts about seven to 10 days.



In darker skin the initial rash redness may be harder to see or it may appear purple or darker than surrounding skin. It can also appear bumpy in appearance.

Symptoms typically develop about eight to 12 days after you're exposed to someone with measles. But there have been times that it takes up to 21 days to develop symptoms after exposure.

DISEASE TRANSMISSION

Measles is an airborne disease and is highly contagious.

Measles is spread by:

Sharing drinks or food with someone with measles.

Kissing someone who has measles.

Shaking hands, holding hands or hugging someone with measles.

Touching a surface containing the virus and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

From pregnant women to their babies — either during the pregnancy, delivery or while nursing.

How long is measles contagious?

You're contagious about four days before you develop a rash until about four days after the rash starts.

That's about eight days in total.

Contact your healthcare provider if you come into contact with someone who has measles. While most cases of measles may be uncomfortable, you can treat the symptoms with rest and over-the-counter pain relievers.

EXPOSURE RISK

Anyone who hasn't gotten the measles vaccine is at risk of getting it. You're also at higher risk if you travel to parts of the world where measles is more common.

People who work in healthcare or childcare facilities are also more at risk because they're more likely to interact with sick people. Take extra precautions like wearing personal protective equipment that includes masks, gowns and gloves. If you work with children, promote good handwashing techniques, and educate parents and guardians about symptoms of viral diseases.

PREVENTION

Vaccination is the best way to prevent measles. If you receive a measles vaccine, you're immune and unlikely ever to get the virus.

There are two types of vaccines (given as shots) that protect against measles:

Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (MMRV) vaccine.

(The varicella part of the vaccine is the chickenpox vaccine.)

When should people be vaccinated for measles?

It's best to receive the vaccine as a child as part of your regular immunization schedule. However, receiving the vaccine at any age is better than not receiving it at all. Most people receive the vaccine as a baby, but you can also receive it as an adult.

Pregnant women shouldn't get a measles vaccine. There may be other reasons why you shouldn't get one, such as having immune system disease or an allergic reaction to a previous vaccine.



MMRV vaccine



Recommended for children starting at age 4 for additional protection against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).