

Measles FACTSHEET

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What is Measles?

Measles is an infectious respiratory viral disease also known as 'Rubeola'. Measles is a more severe disease in the very young and the malnourished.

Who gets Measles?

All persons who have not had the disease or who have not been successfully immunized are susceptible.

What are the symptoms of Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious illness that may have the following symptoms: fever, conjunctivitis, cough, a red blotchy rash appears on the 3rd to 7th day beginning on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. The disease is more severe in infants and adults than in children.

How is Measles spread?

Measles is spread from person-to-person by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people or through the air from an infected person's coughing or sneezing.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within 7 to 18 days, although they may occur as late as 21 days, after exposure.

Is a person with Measles contagious?

A person with measles is highly contagious for approximately four days before the rash appears to at least four days after the rash appears.

How is Measles treated?

There is no specific treatment for measles. However if you believe you have been exposed to measles contact your healthcare provider, especially if you have never had the disease or been vaccinated. There are some medications that may lessen the severity of the disease.

Should a person with Measles be excluded from work or school?

A person with measles should remain at home for five days after the rash appears.

Can you get Measles more than once?

Once an individual has had Measles, they generally develop lifelong immunity from the disease.

Can Measles be prevented?

Measles can be prevented by a two dose vaccination. This is a safe and highly effective vaccine. The first dose of Measles vaccine should be given between 12 and 15 months of age. A second dose of vaccine is given at school entry (4 to 6 years of age). Both doses are generally given as combined measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Want more information?

Information about Measles and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call (202) 442-9371.

