

### What is Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. Outbreaks occur when unvaccinated people become infected and infect others who are not immune.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of measles start with:

- Fever (100.4F or above)
- The 3 Cs: Cough, Coryza (runny, congested, and inflamed nose), and Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- 2–3 days later Koplik spots (white spots in the mouth) may occur
- 3–5 days after first symptoms: measles rash begins.
  - This flat red rash generally starts at the hairline and spreads downward, reaching the hands and feet last.
  - **The rash occurs at the same time as fever, which may spike high near the time of rash onset.**

### How does it spread?

- Measles is airborne, which means the virus can spread easily through the air when a person sick with measles coughs or sneezes.
- The measles virus can remain in the air up to 2 hours after the sick person has left the space.

### How can it be prevented?

The measles vaccine is the best way to prevent measles. Routine vaccination includes:

- 1 dose is required on or after 1st birthday for pre-K
- 2 doses are required for all grade levels K–12.

This vaccine is HIGHLY effective (1 dose 93%, 2 doses 97%) in preventing measles.

### How is it diagnosed?

Measles is diagnosed with a throat or nose swab. The ideal time is to collect the sample within three days of rash onset. The Chicago Department of Public Health can help arrange testing. It normally takes 24–48 hours to receive results. A blood test may also be used to support the diagnosis, but this test is not as important as the throat/nose swab.

### How long does it last?

How many days after exposure does it take for someone to start having symptoms?

- It usually takes 11-12 days but can take up to 21 days.

How long can someone with measles get others sick?

- A person sick with measles can spread it to others starting 4 days before they get a rash until 4 days after rash onset.

### Who is at risk for measles infection?

Anyone who has never been vaccinated or is too young to be fully vaccinated against measles is most at risk for measles infection if they are exposed. Children younger than 5 years old and adults older than 20 years old are more likely to experience complications; pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are also at risk for complications.



### What treatment and preventive measures are available?

There is no specific treatment for measles. Common complications are ear infections and diarrhea, and more serious complications include pneumonia and inflammation of the brain. People with measles need bed rest, fluids, and control of fever. Some people may require specific treatment in a hospital if their symptoms are severe. The measles vaccine is the best way to prevent getting measles and its complications. It is usually given as part of a combination vaccine (MMR vaccine) which protects against measles, mumps, and rubella.

### What are the roles of schools and parents?

- **Everyone should encourage others to get the MMR vaccine, as it is the best protection against the spread of measles.**
  - CDPH recommends that children receive 2 doses of MMR, with 1st dose given at 12 months of age.
- Parents should notify the school if their child is diagnosed with measles and keep them home and away from others until 4 days have passed after the rash appears.
- If there is suspected measles case at school:
  - Separate the suspected case from the other students to wait for pick up and escort them out as far away from the other students as possible, especially students that may be at higher risk.
  - Do not let other students into the room where the suspected case was isolated for at least two hours. Disinfect using normal protocols after suspected case leaves.
- If there is a measles case, the school will send a letter to family and staff members notifying them of the potential exposure. **Schools must wait for CDPH to confirm the case before sending any letters.**
- The school will also identify all students who were in school during the time the student with measles was in school and check if they were vaccinated against measles. The school may provide this list of students to the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) for contact tracing purposes.

### What are the recommendations for exclusion?

- A person with measles is most contagious from 4 days before until 4 days after the rash appears. Therefore, a person with measles should isolate at home for 4 days after the rash begins (e.g., stay home from school or work and do not attend social gatherings).
- Any exposed students who cannot prove immunity must be excluded from school for 21 days after exposure.

### Where can I get more information?

Visit the [CDC measles website](https://www.cdc.gov/measles) or [immunize.org](https://immunize.org) for more information on measles and talk to your doctor about measles vaccination.

