

Measles Fact Sheet

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department | Emergency Preparedness



What is measles?

Measles starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes and sore throat. It's followed by a rash that spreads over the body. Measles virus is a highly contagious virus and spreads through the air though coughing and sneezing.

What are the signs and symptoms of measles?

The symptoms of measles generally appear about 7-14 days after a person is infected. Measles typically begins with

- High fever,
- Cough, runny nose, and
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)

Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth.



Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out. It usually begins as flat red spots that spear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on the top of the flat red spots.

The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body. When the rash appears, a person's fever may spike

to more than 104 degrees Fahrenheit. After a few days, the fever subsides and the rash fades.

How is measles spread?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that lives in the nose and throat mucus of an infected person. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing.

Also, measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where the infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected



surface, then through their eyes, nose, or mouths, they can become infected. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before through four days after the rash appears.



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How should you protect yourself against measles?

Measles can be prevented with the MMR vaccine. The vaccine protects against three diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella. CDC recommends children get two doses of MMR vaccine:

- the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and
- the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age.

Teens and adults should be up to date on their MMR vaccination.

The MMR vaccine is very safe and effective. Two doses of MMR vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles; one dose is about 93% effective.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no specific antiviral therapy for measles. Medical care is supportive and to help relieve symptoms and address complication such as bacterial infections.

Severe measles cases among children, such as those who are hospitalized, should be treated with vitamin A. vitamin A should be administered immediately on diagnosis and repeated the next day.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is committed to providing relevant and timely information during a public health emergency.

For the latest information, please visit:
www.lucascountyhealth.com



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