

Measles (Rubeola)

Definition:

Measles, also known as rubeola, is a viral illness. It has a distinct rash and a fever. It is caused by an extremely contagious morbillivirus that lives in an infected person's nose and throat mucus. It can have serious complications, such as encephalitis, which itself can cause hearing loss. You can prevent measles by getting vaccinated.

Symptoms:

Measles symptoms appear seven to 14 days after contact with the virus. It typically begins with

- high fever
- cough
- runny nose
- red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth (Koplik spots)

Measles rash appears three to five days after the first symptoms. It typically starts as flat, red spots on the face near the hairline and then gradually extends downward, covering the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Eventually, smaller raised white spots may develop on the surface of the initial red rash. Sometimes, these spots can merge as the rash progresses down the body.

Transmission:

Measles is one of the world's most contagious diseases, spread by contact with infected nasal or throat secretions (coughing or sneezing) or inhaling the air that someone with measles has exhaled. The virus remains active and contagious in the air or on infected surfaces for up to two hours. For this reason, it is very infectious, and one person infected by measles can infect nine out of 10 of their unvaccinated close contacts. An infected person can transmit it from four days before the onset of the rash to four days after the rash erupts.

Treatment:

- Taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain or fever
- Getting plenty of rest
- Drinking enough fluids