

MEASLES

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Measles?

Measles (rubeola) is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It is and preventable by vaccination. Persons who have not had the disease and have not been immunized are susceptible.

How is it spread?

Persons are contagious from about 1-2 days before onset of symptoms to 4 days after appearance of rash. Infection usually occurs by breathing in droplets projected into the air by a person with measles.

How is it treated?

- Treatment of measles is symptomatic.
- Physicians can recommend preparations to relieve rash itching and use of acetaminophen to control fever.
- Maintain rest.
- Protect eyes from strong or direct light.
- Encourage fluid intake.

How can we prevent Measles?

- Measles is a vaccine preventable disease.
- Two doses of measles vaccine combined with mumps and rubella (MMR) are recommended.
- The initial MMR is given at 12-15 months of age and the second dose is given at school entry (age 4-6).
- In Michigan all new school enterers must have 2 doses of MMR.
- Unimmunized school enterers can receive 2 doses of MMR one month apart (30 days) to meet this requirement.
- Unimmunized contacts to a measles case should be immunized with MMR within 72 hours after exposure. The vaccine may provide protection.
- Immune globulin may provide short term protection for susceptible contacts for which the risk of complications of measles is very high, such as immunocompromised persons, pregnant women, or infants under 1 year of age.
- Children should not return to school for at least 4 days after appearance of the rash

SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES

- Fever (101 F or higher) 3-4 days before appearance of rash.
- Watery, red eyes, increased sensitivity to light.
- Runny nose.
- Cough.
- Blotchy red rash appears 4-7 days after other symptoms.
- Rash usually starts on face and spreads to trunk and extremities.
- Rash typically lasts 5-7 days.
- Generally, the interval from exposure to appearance of the rash is 14 days.



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