

MEASLES

Fact Sheet

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WHAT IS MEASLES ?

Measles is an acute, highly contagious infectious disease, caused by a virus. Persons who have not had the measles and have not received the measles vaccine are at risk. Measles can be a very serious disease, and can result in ear infections, pneumonia, and in some instances, death.

HOW IS MEASLES SPREAD?

Infection usually occurs by direct contact with droplets of an infected person or by breathing in droplets projected into the air by a person with measles infection. Persons are contagious usually four days before the onset of the rash to four days after the appearance of rash.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES?

- ◆ Fever (101° F or higher) 3-4 days before appearance of a raised red rash.
- ◆ Generally, the rash appears 14 days after exposure to the measles.
- ◆ The rash usually starts at the hairline, then involves the face and upper neck and spreads to the trunk and extremities.
- ◆ Rash typically lasts 4-7 days.
- ◆ Watery, red, eyes and increased sensitivity to light.
- ◆ Runny nose.
- ◆ Cough.

HOW IS MEASLES TREATED?

Treatment of measles is symptomatic. See a physician for treatment of measles symptoms that may include recommendations to:

- ◆ Relieve itching
- ◆ Control fever
- ◆ Maintain rest
- ◆ Protect eyes from strong or direct light
- ◆ Encourage fluid intake

This picture shows a classic day-4 rash with measles.



HOW CAN MEASLES BE PREVENTED?

- ◆ Measles is a vaccine preventable disease.
- ◆ Check with your health care provider to make sure you and your child have been vaccinated.
- ◆ Two doses of Measles vaccine combined with Mumps and Rubella (MMR) are recommended. The first dose is recommended at 12-15 months of age and the second at school entry, age 4-6 years of age.
- ◆ In California, all children entering school must have two doses of MMR vaccine given at the recommended intervals. Unimmunized children entering school can receive the doses of MMR vaccine one month (30 days) apart to meet this requirement.
- ◆ Unimmunized contacts to a measles case should be immunized with MMR within 72 hours after exposure since the vaccine may provide protection.
- ◆ Immune globulin may provide short term protection for at risk contacts for whom the risk of complications of measles is very high, such as immune compromised persons, pregnant women, or infants under one year of age.
- ◆ A child diagnosed with measles should stay home from school for at least four days after the appearance of the rash.

RESOURCES:

San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS)
www.sjcphs.org

California Department of Health Services (CDPH)
www.cdph.ca.gov
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Measles.aspx>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov
<http://www.cdc.gov/MEASLES/ABOUT/INDEX.HTML>