

# Measles

## 1. What is Measles?

Measles is a very contagious disease caused by a virus (germ). This virus lives in the nose and throat.

## 2. How does Measles spread?

The virus spreads easily through the air when a sick person coughs or sneezes. The virus can also stay in the air and on surfaces for many hours. So, you can be infected by being in a room that a sick person was in or by touching an object that they've touched.

Most people who have never been vaccinated against or sick with the measles will get it if they have contact with the virus. A person with measles can spread the disease to others even before they have any symptoms.

## 3. What are the symptoms of Measles?

Measles can cause these signs of disease:

- High Fever (over 101°F)
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Red watery eyes
- A rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body

## 4. What complications can Measles cause?

Measles can cause ear infections and diarrhea. It can also cause serious illness, such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death. Some groups, like 6-19 year olds, seem to have fewer serious health problems due to measles. Other groups, such as pregnant women and people with weak immune systems due to Leukemia or HIV, are more likely to have serious health problems due to measles.

## 5. How is Measles treated?

There is no cure for measles. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and managing the serious health problems that can happen.



### Key Points:

- Measles is a virus that lives in the nose and throat.
- Measles spreads easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Vaccination is the best way to prevent getting and spreading measles.
- Public Health is taking steps to prevent the spread of measles in LA County.

### For more information:

**Los Angeles County,  
Department of Public Health**  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles/index.htm>

**California Department of Public Health**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/public/index.html>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

CDCP-IP-0012-01 (12/23/16)

### 6. What can you do to prevent Measles?

Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading measles. The MMR vaccine's safety and effectiveness records are strong. People should get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated or don't know if they got the MMR vaccine before. Kids should be vaccinated at 12-15 months of age and again at 4-6 years of age. Teens and adults born after 1956 who haven't been vaccinated should get their MMR vaccine.

### 7. Where can you go to get vaccinated?

Call your doctor to get an MMR vaccine, which may be covered by your insurance. You may also be vaccinated at a pharmacy or at a clinic offering no or low-cost vaccinations. Call 2-1-1 or visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip) to find a nearby clinic.

### 8. What should you do if you think you may have Measles?

If you think that you or someone in your family has been exposed to or has measles, contact your doctor's office right away. Tell them that you might have measles before you go, so they can take steps to prevent other patients and staff from being exposed.

### 9. Why have there been more Measles cases in the news lately?

Most people in the United States (U.S.) are protected against measles through vaccination. The U.S. has seen more cases than usual because fewer people have been getting their MMR vaccine or have travelled to or from places where measles is more common.

### 10. What is the Department of Public Health doing to prevent Measles?

The LA County Department of Public Health works to stop people from getting and spreading disease by:

- Investigating all measles cases in the county
- Identifying people who may have had contact with someone sick with measles
- Educating health care providers regarding measles symptoms, diagnosis, and reporting
- Taking safety measures, like giving the MMR vaccine or restricting participation in school or work, for unvaccinated people who may have come in contact with measles
- Reporting cases to the California Department of Public Health so they can see the impact measles is having across the state

### Want to learn more about the current outbreak?

For information about current cases, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>

California Department of Public Health

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Measles.aspx>

World Health Organization

[http://www.who.int/immunization/monitoring\\_surveillance/burden/vpd/surveillance\\_type/active/measles\\_monthlydata/en/](http://www.who.int/immunization/monitoring_surveillance/burden/vpd/surveillance_type/active/measles_monthlydata/en/)

