

# Measles

## 1. What is Measles?

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases caused by an airborne virus. This virus lives in the nose and throat of an infected person and can rapidly spread to the rest of the body, affecting the lungs, the brain, and other organs.

## 2. How does Measles spread?

The virus spreads easily through the air when a sick person breathes, talks, coughs, or sneezes. The virus can stay in the air and on surfaces for many hours, even after the infected person has left. You can get infected by being in a room that a sick person was in, or by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth after touching an object that they touched.

Nine out of 10 people who have not received the measles vaccine will get measles 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?

Common measles symptoms include:

- 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 are complications of Measles ?

Measles can cause ear infections, diarrhea, pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death. Children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, and people with weak immune systems, are more likely to have serious complications due to measles.

## 5. How is Measles treated?

There is no cure for measles. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and managing the serious health complications 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 Los Angeles County.

### For more information:

Measles

[www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html)

Immunization Schedules, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/)

Vaccine Requirements for School Entry?

[www.shotsforschool.org/](http://www.shotsforschool.org/)

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

Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading measles. The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is very safe and is more than 95% effective in preventing disease. People should get the MMR vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated, or do not 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.

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

Call your doctor to get the MMR vaccine, which may be covered by your insurance. If you don't have insurance, you can still get vaccinated at a pharmacy or at a clinic offering no- or low-cost, vaccinations. Visit [publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/clinics.htm](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/clinics.htm) or call 2-1-1 for a list of low- or no-cost vaccine clinics.

### 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 immediately. 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. may be seeing more measles cases than usual because more people are travelling now, and may have travelled to or from places where measles is more common. The best way to protect yourself from getting measles when traveling is to get vaccinated beforehand.

### 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 to provide case management and identify who has been exposed to the infected person.
- Identifying, checking immunity status, and monitoring symptoms in people who may have had contact with someone sick with measles to prevent further spread of disease.
- Educating health care providers regarding measles symptoms, diagnosis, and reporting.
- Taking safety measures, such as providing MMR vaccine and/or restricting participation in school or work, for unvaccinated people who may have been exposed to measles.

### Want to learn more about outbreaks and cases?

#### For information about current cases, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html)

California Department of Public Health  
[www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/measles.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/measles.aspx)

World Health Organization  
[www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/measles---number-of-reported-cases](http://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/measles---number-of-reported-cases)

