



1. What is measles?

Measles is a disease caused by a virus (germ). It causes high fever and rash and can also cause pneumonia, brain damage, or death. Measles is the most serious for children under five years of age and adults older than twenty years of age. Measles and German measles, also known as rubella, are not the same disease.

2. Who gets measles?

Anyone who is exposed to the measles virus and has not gotten all of the shots that are recommended and who has never had measles before can get the disease.

3. How is measles spread?

Measles can spread easily through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread by touching items such as a tissue or door knob that have been coughed or sneezed on by a person with measles. Because symptoms often do not appear for 10 to 14 days people with the measles can spread it before they even know they are sick.

People who have not had their measles shots are the most likely to get measles.

4. How do you know if you might have measles?

Symptoms of the measles include:

- High fever
- Coughing, nasal congestion, and a runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Red, blotchy rash that begins on the face and moves downward to the neck, body, arms and legs

If you have these symptoms, a doctor will do some tests to decide whether you have measles.

5. How is measles treated?

There is no specific treatment for measles; however, the measles shot can prevent a person from getting measles if given before or within 3 days of a person's exposure to someone with measles.

6. Should infected people be kept from going to work or school?

Measles is easily spread from one person to another, so those with measles should not attend school or work until they cannot spread the disease (about 4 days after the rash appears). Your doctor will tell you when it is safe to return to work or school.

Measles shots (MMR vaccine) are required before going to daycare or school. If anyone at school gets the measles, any children who have not received all recommended measles shots will be kept home until there is no chance that they will catch the disease.

7. What can be done to protect against measles?

Shots (vaccines) are the best protection against getting measles. The shot that prevents measles- the MMR shot- also prevents rubella and the mumps. MMR shots are safe and effective.

- Children should get 2 doses of MMR vaccine:
 - The first dose at 12-15 months of age
 - The second dose at 4-6 years of age
- Adults born after 1956 should get an MMR shot, unless they can show that they had the measles or the recommended measles shots.
- All health care workers should be protected against measles.

8. Where can I get more information?

For more information about measles, the MMR vaccine, or where to find no-cost or low-cost shots, visit the Los Angeles County Public Health Department Immunization Program on the web at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip or dial 2-1-1.

Sources

1. *Measles*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/in-short-adult.htm>
2. *Measles*. Medline Plus. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/measles.html>
3. *Immunization Program*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/>
4. Heymann, DL. *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 18th Edition*. American Public Health Association.

For additional resources, please dial 2-1-1 or visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.