







Measles and the Importance of Childhood Vaccination

Symptoms of measles

Measles starts with a fever that can get very high. Some of the other symptoms that may occur are:



-  **Rash** (tiny, red spots that start at the head and spread to the rest of the body)
-  **Cough**
-  **Red and/or watery eyes**
-  **Runny nose**
-  **Diarrhea**
-  **Ear infection**



Images show the usual rash caused by measles

How serious is measles?

Measles is a very serious virus and can be dangerous, especially for babies and young children. For some children, measles can lead to:

-  **Pneumonia** (infection of the lungs)
-  **Encephalitis** (swelling of the brain)

1 in 5

people with measles will be hospitalized.



How is measles spread?

Measles is a very contagious virus. Almost everyone who has not had the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine will get measles if they are exposed to the measles virus.

- Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus **breathes, coughs, or sneezes.**
- You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, **up to 2 hours after that person is gone.**
- You can catch measles from an infected person **even before they have a measles rash.**

9 in 10

people exposed to measles in a household or other close contact setting will get measles if they are not protected.



Measles cases in the United States

Every year, unvaccinated people living in the United States get measles while traveling outside the country and spread it to others. Travelers can bring measles into the United States from any country where the disease still occurs or where outbreaks are occurring. In recent years, many measles cases came into the United States from common travel destinations.

Measles cases remain low in the United States because of our strong vaccination program. **However, anyone unvaccinated can be at risk.**

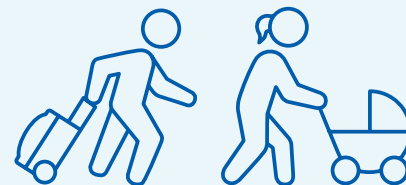


Vaccination is important

The **MMR vaccine** is the best way to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella. **Two doses of the MMR vaccine** are recommended for children. Your child will need one dose at each of the following ages:

12–15
MONTHS

4–6
YEARS



CDC recommends that babies ages **6 to 11 months** get one dose of the MMR vaccine before traveling to another country.

Side effects from the MMR vaccine are rare and usually mild

Most children don't have any side effects from the vaccine. The side effects that do occur are usually mild and may include:

- **Soreness, redness, or swelling** where the shot was given
- **Fever**
- **Mild rash**
- **Temporary pain and stiffness in the joints**

More serious side effects are rare. These may include high fever that could cause a seizure (jerking, twitching of the muscles, or staring).



Febrile seizures can be frightening, but nearly all children who have them recover quickly. Febrile seizures are not considered to cause any permanent harm or have any lasting effects.



Make sure your child is up to date on all recommended vaccinations.

To learn more, talk to your child's healthcare provider and visit CDC's website.

Learn more about measles:



View vaccine schedules:

