



## Measles Fact Sheet

**Symptoms:** Measles is a highly contagious, viral illness. It begins with fever, cough, runny nose, and pink eye, which lasts 2-4 days before a rash develops. Measles can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis, and death.

**Infection:** People get measles when they are around an infected person who is coughing and sneezing; infected people are contagious from 4 days before their rash starts until 4 days after their rash starts. After an infected person leaves a room, the virus remains alive for up to two hours on surfaces and in the air. That means you can become sick even if the person is not in the room with you at the same time.

Those who have not been fully vaccinated are most at risk for getting measles.

Measles is not often seen in the United States. However, outbreaks can start when a traveler returns from a part of the world where measles is common, becomes sick, and exposes those who have not been vaccinated to the disease.

**Vaccination:** The **best protection** is for you and all of your family to be up-to-date on your MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. The MMR vaccine is a **two** dose series (you must receive two shots to complete the series and ensure the best protection). The two doses must be separated by at least 4 weeks.

Babies should receive their first MMR vaccine when they are at least 12 months old.

**Community Protection:** It is very important for those who are around a baby or any other person who cannot receive an MMR (like someone with an illness that will not allow them to get the vaccine) to be immunized. If a lot of people in a community get the vaccine, it will help to protect those who cannot get the vaccine (herd immunity).

If you think that you or a family member has the measles, call your medical provider before going to the medical office. The staff will tell you what to do so that you will not expose any other patients to the illness.

If you do have measles, follow your doctor's instructions and stay away from others.

**Information:** Please call (910) 989-3992 to speak to the immunization coordinator if you have questions about the measles or the measles vaccine.