



Measles Facts Sheet

(Source: www.CDC.gov & UpToDate)

What is measles?

- Measles is an infection caused by a virus.
- It is very contagious and spreads easily from person to person.



What are the symptoms of measles?

- Measles starts with a high fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and a sore throat.
- Later, a rash of tiny red spots that can become blotchy appears. The rash starts on the face or hairline, and then spreads down the rest of the body.

How is measles spread?

- Measles is very contagious.
- Measles is spread when an infected person breathes, sneezes, or coughs, and the virus is released into the air.
- A person who has not had the measles shot can catch it by going into a room where an infected person was, even up to 2 hours after that person has left the room.
- 90% of people who have not had the measles shot will catch measles if they are exposed.
- A person with measles can unknowingly spread the disease 4 days before the rash starts, and 4 days after the rash first appears.

Is measles dangerous?

- Measles can be very serious, especially for children younger than 5 years old and adults older than 20 years old.

Complications of measles can include:

- Ear infection
- Pneumonia (a lung infection)
- Deafness
- Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain that can lead to brain damage)
- Death

How is measles treated?

- There is no medicine for measles.
- Treatment is supportive care through rest, fluids, and control of fever and discomfort with over the counter medicines like Tylenol.



What should I do if I think my child has measles?

- Call your doctor's office. They will ask you more questions and tell you what to do next.
- Don't go into the doctor's office, urgent care or emergency department before speaking to a nurse or doctor.

Can measles be prevented?

- The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) shot prevents measles infection. It also prevents mumps and rubella infection.
- All children should get the first MMR shot when they are 12-15 months old, and the second MMR shot between 4-6 years old.
- One MMR shot is 93% effective at preventing illness. Two shots provides 97% protection.

Is the measles shot safe?

- Yes, the measles shot is very safe.
- Most children have no side effects.
- Typical side effects are very mild, such as soreness at the shot site and low-grade fever.

Does the measles shot cause autism?

- No, the measles shot does not cause autism.
- Scientists in the United States and around the world have studied this for many years.
- There is no link between the MMR shot and autism.

What is happening with the measles outbreak in Vancouver/Clark County?

- The outbreak is active with new cases still being identified.
- The outbreak is linked to cases in Gresham and Bend, Oregon, Hawaii, and Georgia.
- There are currently 65 confirmed cases and one suspected case.
- Two new exposure sites have been identified, including an urgent care facility and a school.
- For up to date information, go to www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/measles-investigation