

Measles Parent Instructions

NY State is currently experiencing a measles outbreak. Measles spreads very easily and can be dangerous to anyone who is not vaccinated.

What is measles?

Measles is a serious respiratory disease that causes a rash and fever. It is very contagious. You can catch it just by being in a room where someone with measles coughed or sneezed.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually appear about 10 to 12 days after a person is exposed to measles. The first symptoms are usually:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red watery eyes
- Rash
 - Small red spots, some of which are slightly raised.
 - Spots and bumps in tight clusters give the skin a splotchy red appearance.
 - Usually appears 2 to 4 days after the fever begins and lasts 5 to 6 days.
 - Begins at the hairline, moves to the face and neck, down the body and then to the arms and legs.

What are the complications of measles?

A small number of people who get measles will need to be hospitalized and could die. Many people with measles have complications such as diarrhea, ear infections, brain infection, or pneumonia.

How long is a person with measles contagious?

A person with measles can pass it to others from 4 days before a rash appears through the 4th day after the rash appears.

Is there a treatment for measles?

There is no treatment for measles. Care is usually aimed at lessening symptoms and complications. People with measles need bed rest and fluids.

If my child or another family member has been exposed to measles, what should I do?

Immediately call your doctor for advice. Never been vaccinated? Get the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine within 3 days of being exposed. This may prevent you from getting measles. Some people may need an immune globulin shot -- antibodies to the measles virus. It should be given within 6 days of being exposed. This may prevent or lessen the severity of measles.

What is the best way to prevent measles?

You can protect your child against measles with a combination vaccine that provides protection against three diseases: measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). The MMR vaccine is proven to be very safe and effective. CDC recommends that children get two doses:

- The first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and
- the second dose before entering school at 4 through 6 years of age.

What should I do if I'm not sure I was vaccinated against measles?

Check with your health care provider. If you were born before 1957 it's likely that you have been exposed to the virus and are immune. Ask your doctor if you've been properly vaccinated.

When to keep your child out of school:

1. If there is any suspicion of measles, please keep your child home from school and call your pediatrician.
2. Your child should not attend school if he/she is not well enough to learn.
3. A child should not be in school if he/she has a temperature over 100°F under the armpit or 100.4°F orally.
4. Severe sore throat accompanied by fever or malaise.
5. Vomiting more than twice in 24 hours.
6. Diarrhea more than twice in 24 hours.
7. Persistent cough that disrupts the class.
8. Severe headache, especially when accompanied by fever.
9. Suspicious rash.

If you have any other questions please consult your pediatrician.

Sincerely,
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School Physician