

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MEASLES

Who should be vaccinated and when?

- Children should get their first dose of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine at 12 months. The second dose of MMR is usually given between ages 4-6 but may be given as soon as one month after the first dose.
- An early dose of MMR is recommended for children 6-12 months of age who will be travelling internationally or where outbreaks are occurring.
- Adults who have not had measles or measles vaccine should receive one dose of MMR vaccine, particularly if they were born in 1957 or later.
- Students (including college students), health care workers and international travelers need to have received two doses of MMR vaccine, if they have not they should get vaccinated.

What are the symptoms of measles?

- Rash AND
- Fever AND
- Cough OR runny nose OR watery/mattering eyes

Symptoms appear about eight to 12 days after a person is exposed to measles. The first symptom is usually fever and then a rash. The rash consists of small red spots, some of which are slightly raised. Spots and bumps in tight clusters give the skin a splotchy red appearance. The rash usually appears two to three days after the fever begins and lasts five to six days. The rash begins at the hairline, moves to the face and upper neck and then down the body.

If I suspect someone in my family has symptoms of measles, what should I do?

Be sure to stay home and avoid having visitors until you have talked with your doctor or clinic. Your doctor or clinic will tell you if you should come in for a visit.

How serious is measles?

Measles can lead to hospitalization and death. Many people with measles have complications like diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia or acute encephalitis (a brain infection that can lead to permanent brain damage). Complications are more common in children younger than age 5 and adults older than 20.

Measles during pregnancy increases the risk of premature labor, miscarriage and low birth weight infants.

Measles can be especially severe in people whose immune systems are weak.

How does measles spread?

Measles is spread through the air when people who have it breathe and cough. It is highly contagious. You cannot get measles more than once because after you have had it you are immune.

How long is a person with measles contagious?

A person with measles can pass it to others from four days before a rash appears to four days after the rash appears.

Is there a treatment for measles?

No, there is no specific treatment for measles. People with measles need bed rest, fluids and their fever controlled. They also may need treatment for complications, such as diarrhea, ear infection or pneumonia.

If my child or I have been exposed to measles, what should I do?

Call your doctor or clinic immediately. You will be told if you need to come in for a visit.

If you have not been vaccinated, getting an MMR shot within three days of being exposed may prevent you from getting measles.

If you get a shot of immune globulin (a blood product with antibodies to the measles virus) within six days of being exposed to measles, it may prevent or lessen the severity of measles.

How can I check if my child is up-to-date on the MMR vaccination?

Call your doctor's office or clinic. Immunization records are also available 24/7 if you have an Essentia MyHealth account for your child. MyHealth will tell you if your child needs the MMR.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**For parents**

Minnesota Department of Health

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/basics.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/measles.html>

For health care professionals

Minnesota Department of Health

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/hcp/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Measles: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/index.html>

MMR vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/hcp/index.html>