

Measles

What causes measles?

Measles is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. The virus normally grows in the cells that line the back of the throat and in the cells that line the lungs.

What are the symptoms of measles?

The symptoms are rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes (lasts about a week). Symptoms begin 7-21 days (average 10 days) after exposure to the virus. The infected person first experiences a fever lasting about 2 to 4 days that can peak as high as 103 degrees F to 105 degrees F. This is followed by the onset of cough, runny nose, and/or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The rash usually appears about 14 days after exposure and lasts 5 to 6 days. It begins at the hairline, then involves the face and upper neck. Over the next 3 days, the rash gradually proceeds downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet.

Measles Disease

Measles is a viral disease easily spread from person to person through the air.

Who is at Risk?

Measles is spread to at risk people by coughing and sneezing from infected person. You are at risk if:

- You have not received 2 doses of measles containing vaccine
- You were born in or after 1957
- You have not had measles confirmed by a doctor

The disease is highly contagious, and can be transmitted from 4 days before to 4 days after the rash develops. If one person has it, 9 out of 10 at risk people may also become infected with the measles virus.