



## Measles: FAQs

**Measles** is a serious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) that causes a rash and fever. It is very contagious. In rare cases, it can be deadly.

**What are the symptoms of measles?** Measles starts with a fever that can get very high. Some of the other symptoms that may occur are:

- Cough, runny nose, and red eyes
- Rash of tiny, red spots that start at the head and spread to the rest of the body
- Diarrhea
- Ear infection

**Is it serious?** Measles can be dangerous, especially for babies and young children. More than one-quarter of those with the disease are hospitalized. For some children, measles can lead to: pneumonia, lifelong brain damage, deafness, or death.

**How does measles spread?** Measles spreads when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes. It is very contagious. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, up to 2 hours after that person is gone. You can catch measles from an infected person even before they have a measles rash.

**How can we protect children from measles?** Make sure they receive the MMR vaccine. Almost everyone without a MMR vaccine will get measles if they are exposed to the virus.

Students who are not fully vaccinated with MMR are banned from attending school for 21 days, whenever a measles case occurs in their school. This helps to prevent other students from getting measles. Students can return to school earlier if they receive the vaccine.

**What is the MMR shot?** It protects your child from measles, the uncomfortable rash and high fever from measles, and keeps your child from missing school. The MMR shot is very safe, and it is effective at preventing measles (as well as mumps and rubella). Most children who get the MMR shot have no side effects. The side effects that do occur are usually very mild, such as a fever or rash. More serious side effects are rare. These may include high fever that could cause a seizure (in about 1 person out of every 3,000 who get the shot) and temporary pain and stiffness in joints (mostly in teens and adults).

MMR vaccination is a two shot series. An excellent website for more information is at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>

**I am worried my child has measles; Now what?** It is best not to take your child to a busy hospital or medical office. Instead, call your doctor's office and tell them about your child's symptoms. Your doctor may arrange to see your child privately.