

MEASLES

FACT SHEET

What is Measles?

Measles is primarily a respiratory infection caused by a highly contagious virus. It occurs mainly in children. It is also sometimes called Rubeola.

Symptoms of Measles

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (Conjunctivitis)
- Sensitivity to light
- Tiny white spots with bluish-white centers found inside the mouth on the inner lining of the cheek, called Koplik's spots
- A skin rash made up of large, flat blotches that often flow into one another.



How do People get Measles?

The Measles virus lives in the mucus in the nose and throat of an infected child or adult. Measles is spread by contact with an infected person, through coughing and sneezing. The disease is highly contagious and can be transmitted from 4 days prior to the onset of the rash to 4 days after the onset. If one person has it, 90% of their susceptible close contacts will also become infected with the Measles virus.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Measles

Your doctor can usually diagnose Measles based on the disease's characteristic rash as well as the small, bright red spots with bluish-white centers on the inside lining of the cheek, called Koplik's spots. Because Measles is so uncommon in the United States today, your doctor may obtain a blood sample to confirm whether the rash is truly Measles.

There is no specific medical treatment for Measles. To help manage symptoms, which usually last for about 2 weeks, give your child plenty of fluids and encourage extra rest. If fever is making your child uncomfortable, you may want to give a non-aspirin fever medication such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

How Can I Help Prevent the Spread of Measles?

The measles vaccine is extremely effective, and is the best way to prevent the spread of Measles.

For more information, contact a Public Health Nurse at the City-County Health Department at 454-6950 or visit www.cchdmt.org or www.cdc.gov