

Measles is a highly contagious virus spread through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes and sore throat, followed by a rash. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine protects against measles.

Recent cases across the United States show that measles is still a concern.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles symptoms may include the following:

- High fever
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Red eyes
- Sore throat
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth
- Rash that spreads over the face and body

How is it spread?

When a person who is sick with measles talks, coughs or sneezes, the virus is released into the air and enters another person's body through the nose, mouth or throat.

The measles virus can live on contaminated surfaces and in the airspace where an infected person was for up to two hours.

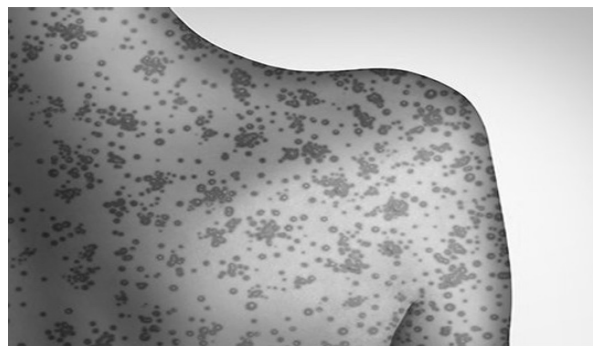
Measles is one of the most contagious diseases. In fact, if 100 susceptible people are in a room with someone who is infected, 90 of them are likely to become ill with measles.

Measles may be transmitted from four days before through four days after the onset of a rash.

Is it a serious disease? Can you die from getting the measles?

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease and complications are dangerous. Six to 20 percent of the people who get the disease will get an ear infection, diarrhea, or even pneumonia.

One out of 1,000 people with measles will develop inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), and about one out of 1,000 will die.



Children younger than 5 years of age and adults older than 20 years of age are more likely to suffer from measles complications.

How are people protected from the measles?

People are generally considered to be protected if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Born before January 1, 1957
- Received the complete measles vaccine series (2 doses)
- Were previously infected with the measles

These people are generally considered to be protected (immune) from acquiring measles, even if they have been in contact with an infected person.

Doesn't Princeton require the measles shot for all students?

Princeton requires two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine for all incoming students - except those who cannot get the vaccine for valid medical reasons or because of religious beliefs. Over 99.5 percent of all Princeton students have received two doses of the vaccine.

Could I still get measles if I am fully vaccinated?

Only about three out of 100 who get two doses of measles vaccine will still get measles if exposed to the virus. Fortunately, fully vaccinated people who get measles are much more likely to have a milder illness, and they are also less likely to spread the disease to other people.

Should I get vaccinated if I am not protected or I do not know?

Getting vaccinated is the only way to prevent future infection if you come in contact with an infected person. People who cannot receive the vaccine include anyone with a medical reason they cannot get the

vaccine (e.g., cancer, weakened immune system, allergic reaction to the antibiotic neomycin) and pregnant women. Pregnant women should wait to get MMR vaccine until after they have given birth.

Do I need to get a “booster” shot?

Not if you received two doses of the vaccine. Even if you received two doses of measles vaccine as a child, according to the U.S. vaccination schedule, you are considered protected for life and do not need a booster dose.

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no cure for measles, only supportive treatments, including:

- bed rest
- fluids
- fever reduction

Most patients will recover on their own, without complications.

How do I know if I have the measles?

If you experience any of the symptoms above, immediately call your health care provider BEFORE going to see them.

If you are a student, call University Health Services at 609-258-3141. If you are faculty or staff, call your primary care provider.

When you are seen by a health care provider, they will observe your symptoms and take a blood sample to test for infection.

I thought it only affected infants and the elderly. Can adults get it?

Yes, anyone who is not protected can get measles and, while rare, it is possible for individuals who are protected to get measles. While young children and the elderly are at increased risk, adults who do not have evidence of immunity against measles should get vaccinated to protect themselves from infection.

Can I get measles from someone who was born before January 1, 1957, or is considered to be immune from a measles infection?

People who were born before January 1, 1957, have completed the measles vaccine series or were previously infected with the measles, are generally

considered to be protected (immune) from acquiring measles and cannot spread it to others, even if they have been in contact with an infected person.

Can measles be spread by someone who is not sick?

Only someone who is infected with measles can spread measles for up to four days before and four days after the rash appears. However, the infected person may not know that they have measles for the first few days.

If I am a pregnant, what should I do?

Check with your physician.

Women who get measles during pregnancy typically have normal pregnancies and deliver healthy babies, but there is a slightly increased risk of miscarriage, infection, preterm labor, or low birth weight.

What if I have questions about measles that are not addressed here?

Check with your physician.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has measles information on its website, as does the New Jersey Department of Health on its website.

Regional Measles Alerts

Current information on measles outbreaks in New Jersey is available from the New Jersey Department of Health.

Go to www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ and select Measles from the A-Z List.

Additional Information

More information is available on the Princeton Emergency Management website: emergency.princeton.edu