

Measles (Rubeola)

Updated 11/05

Measles is an acute, highly contagious viral disease capable of producing epidemics. Measles, which is more common in winter and spring, is one of the most readily transmitted communicable diseases. Although measles is usually considered a childhood disease, it can be contracted at any age and is more severe in infants and adults. Generally, preschool children, adolescents, young adults and inadequately immunized individuals comprise the majority of measles cases in the United States and are usually linked to an imported case from outside the United States. Measles immunization is required of all children enrolled in public and private schools and pre-kindergarten programs. In addition, state university students are required to demonstrate immunity against measles. Measles is clinically defined as a generalized rash lasting three or more days, fever, and cough, coryza or conjunctivitis.

Transmission

- Direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people
- Airborne transmission

Symptoms

- Stage One
 - Runny nose, cough and a slight fever
 - Eyes may become reddened and sensitive to light
 - Fever consistently rises each day
- Stage Two
 - Begins on the third to seventh day
 - Temperature of 103 – 105 °F
 - Red blotchy rash lasting four to seven days that usually begins on the face and then spreads over the entire body
 - Koplik spots (little white spots) on the gums and inside the cheeks

Treatment/Care

- Nutritional support and treatment of dehydration with oral rehydration solution
- Antibiotics for treating eye and ear infections and pneumonia

Complications

- Pneumonia, encephalitis
- Middle ear infection, convulsions

Prevention

- MMR vaccine - the first dose should be given on or after the first birthday; the second dose should be given at four to six years of age (school entry) at the same time as the DTP and polio booster doses

The last confirmed case of measles in Florida was in Hillsborough County in 2004.

More information

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub_measles.htm

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vaccine/MMR/default.htm>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs286/en/>