

Student Health

Measles FAQ's

What is measles and how is it spread?

- Measles is a highly contagious viral infection spread by droplets from the respiratory tract of infected people. Virus can also survive in the air as tiny, aerosolized droplets for up to 2 hours.
- If exposed to someone with measles, up to 90% of people who are not immune will also become infected.
- An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing they have the disease. You can spread measles to others from 4 days before through 4 days after the rash appears.

What are the symptoms of Measles?

Measles symptoms appear 7 to 14 days after contact with the virus. Common Measles symptoms include:

- High fever (may spike to more than 104° F)
- Cough
- Runny nose (coryza)
- Red, watery eyes ([conjunctivitis](#))
- Rash (starts on face and spreads downward onto chest/trunk, then extremities)
- Risk of complications: ear infections, diarrhea, pneumonia, encephalitis, hospitalization and death (highest risk in immunocompromised or younger patients). A rare but fatal neurological complication, called subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), can occur years (7-10yr) after infection.

Who is at risk for Measles infection?

- **Anyone who is not vaccinated against Measles with the MMR vaccination**
- Travelers to countries with increased Measles incidence
- People with exposures to people/communities with Measles outbreaks

How can I protect myself against Measles?

- **Make sure you have completed the 2 dose MMR vaccine series.**
- 1 dose of MMR provides ~93% protection, 2 doses MMR provide ~97% protection
- Make an appt with SHC or other medical provider if you are interested in vaccination.

- In the United States, booster doses of MMR are not recommended for the general public. Booster doses may be recommended in communities with an outbreak.
- **The MMR vaccine is safe and highly effective** in providing protection against measles.

Who cannot receive the MMR vaccine?

- People with compromised immune systems (from medical problems or medications that suppress the immune system)
- Pregnant people
- People with history of a severe allergy or allergic reaction to prior MMR vaccine.
- Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more and see if you are eligible for MMR vaccine.

What should I do if I have been exposed to someone with measles?

- Anyone not vaccinated is at risk of getting measles after exposure.
- If you are vaccinated and exposed to measles, you are much less likely to contract measles, but it is still possible.
- Remain home and contact your healthcare provider if you suspect you have been exposed.
- Isolate at home and call your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of measles.

TN Dept of Health Measles information for the Public:

[Tennessee Department of Health Measles \(Rubeola\)](#)

CDC Measles FAQ's:

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html>

CDC Measles Disease Overview:

[Measles Symptoms and Complications | Measles \(Rubeola\) | CDC](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Measles information:

[Measles](#)

US Measles Activity Tracker from Johns Hopkins:

[Johns Hopkins US Measles Tracker](#)