

MEASLES FACT SHEET

What is measles?

Measles is a serious disease caused by a virus. Measles infection spreads readily from person to person.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Symptoms typically appear 10-12 days after being exposed to someone with measles.

Symptoms can appear anywhere from 7-21 days after exposure. Symptoms may include:

- high fever
- runny nose
- cough
- pink or red, watery eyes
- rash

The rash develops 2-3 days after the fever begins and usually lasts for 5-6 days. The rash starts on the face and neck, and then spreads down the body.

How common is measles?

Before the first measles vaccine was licensed in 1963, disease was very common. In the years following the availability of vaccine has dramatically reduced the number of infections. Currently in the U.S., most measles infections are a result of international travel exposure or exposure to populations with low vaccination rates among children.

Who can get measles?

Measles usually occurs in preschool age children who have not had their measles vaccine and school age children and young adults who have had only one shot of measles vaccine. Almost everyone born before 1957 has already had measles. Individuals with history of disease cannot get measles disease again.

What is the treatment for measles?

Check with your health care provider for management of measles. Although most people recover completely measles can cause complications. Severe cases of measles may develop diarrhea, ear problems, pneumonia, infection of the brain, and even death. Infants and adults usually develop more severe disease than children and teenagers.

How is measles spread?

Measles virus is spread easily. The virus is spread from one person to another by contact with:

- Infected air from a cough or sneeze of a person with measles; and
- Infected secretions from the nose or throat of a person with measles

How can measles be prevented?

Measles vaccine is the most effective means of preventing disease. Talk with your health care provider to discuss your immunization needs.

What should be done if I think I have measles or someone I know has measles?

Call Contra Costa Public Health at **(925) 313-6740** or your doctor if you think you have measles or have been exposed to someone with measles. The measles vaccine may prevent illness if you receive it within 3 days of contact with the measles virus and another medication (Immune Globulin) may prevent illness if you receive it within 6 days of contact with the measles virus. **Always call or alert healthcare staff before visiting the**



doctor's office or emergency room so steps can be taken to prevent the spread of measles to other people.

Where can I get more information about measles?

For additional information contact Contra Costa Public Health at (925) 313-6740 or check the internet links at: www.cchealth.org/measles or <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/>