



LIBERTY

BLUE HEALTH COVER

What you need to know about Measles

LIFE INVESTMENTS HEALTH CORPORATE PROPERTIES ADVICE

What is Measles?

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease. Since this virus spreads very easily, vaccination for measles is very important in order to prevent contracting the disease.

Blue covers the full costs of measles vaccinations for children.



How is Measles spread?

Measles is spread through droplet transmission from the nose, throat and mouth of someone who is infected with the virus. These droplets are sprayed out when the infected person coughs or sneezes.

The infected person is infectious for four days prior to and after the appearance of the rash. The measles virus can remain in the air (and still be infectious) for up to two hours after an infected person has left a room.



What is the danger of getting Measles while pregnant?

If you contract measles while you are pregnant, you may have a miscarriage, a stillbirth, or a preterm delivery. There appears to be relatively lower risk of having birth defects compared to some other infections such as Rubella (German measles).



What are the symptoms of measles?

The typical case of measles usually starts with a fever, runny nose, hacking cough and red eyes. After two to four days of these symptoms, the patient may develop spots within the mouth called Koplik's spots. These spots look like little grains of white sand surrounded by a red ring and are usually found inside the cheek toward the back of the mouth. A skin rash appears 3 to 5 days after the onset of the initial symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, and red eyes). The rash is a flat to slightly raised red rash that usually lasts 5 to 6 days. It begins at the hairline and then progresses to the face and upper neck. Over the next 2 to 3 days, the rash progresses downward to cover the entire body, including the hands and feet.

Who is at risk for getting Measles?

- Children less than 1 year of age (although they have some immunity passed from their mother, it is not 100% effective),
- People who have not received the proper vaccination
- People who received immunoglobulin at the time of measles vaccination, and
- People immunized from 1963 until 1967 with an older ineffective measles vaccine.



How is the diagnosis of Measles made?

The diagnosis of suspected measles is mostly clinical, meaning that the appearance and history of the patient suggest the diagnosis. In a person with known exposure to someone with measles or when the patient has recently travelled to a foreign country, measles should always be considered when faced with a patient who has a high fever and a characteristic rash. Until the rash appears, the presence of Koplik's spots should help to suggest the diagnosis.

Is there any treatment for Measles after symptoms develop?

The treatment of patients with measles is mostly focused on symptom relief. Specific complications like pneumonia may require antibiotics. Patients should be on bed rest until the fever has resolved and should remain well hydrated. Your health care provider can give you advice on what to do if a family member has measles in terms of reducing the chances of other members becoming infected.



If I am exposed, how long does it take to develop symptoms?

The typical time from exposure to a person infected with measles to development of the initial symptoms is 10-12 days (range 7 to 21 days). The rash occurs a few days after the initial symptoms (ranges from 7 to 18 days from exposure).

What should I do if I have been exposed to Measles?

People who have been appropriately vaccinated (or who have had the disease) and who are exposed to a patient with measles do not need to do anything. If an unimmunized person is exposed to a patient with measles, they should seek the advice of their doctor to decide what interventions should take place, if any.



How does one become immune to Measles?

Anyone who has had measles is believed to be immune for life. People who have received two doses of vaccine have a 98% likelihood of being immune. Infants receive some immunity from their mother. Unfortunately, this immunity is not complete, and infants are at increased risk for infection until they receive their first vaccination. The first vaccination for measles is usually at 9 months with a second booster vaccination at 18 months.



How can I prevent contracting Measles?

The only way to meaningfully reduce your chances of contracting measles is by being vaccinated. The vaccination is usually given as an injection containing measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) or can be a measles vaccine alone. Measles vaccinations for children up to the age of 6 years old are covered by Blue. These vaccinations are chosen on the basis of efficiency and cost-effectiveness and are in line with local and international guidelines. It is important to make sure that both you and your children are vaccinated if you have never contracted measles or yet had the vaccine.