



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

190 E Michigan Ave
Battle Creek, MI 49014

calhouncountymi.gov/publichealth
269-969-6370

Fact Sheet

Measles

What is measles?

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. Measles is most common in late winter and spring.

Who gets measles?

The measles virus can infect any person of any age who has not previously had the disease or the measles vaccine.

How is measles spread?

The infection is highly contagious and spread by airborne droplets and by direct contact with the nose or throat secretions of infected persons. Measles is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90% of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected. Infected people can spread measles to others from four days before through four days after the rash appears.

How common is measles?

Before the vaccine was licensed in 1963, there were an estimated 3-4 million cases of measles in the United States every year. Widespread use of the measles vaccine in the United States makes outbreaks very rare in this country. There can occasionally be outbreaks among visitors to the United States and travelers returning from other countries. New cases continue to be reported, primarily in populations that have refused vaccination.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles is typically known for a rash that covers the entire body, but measles can be dangerous. Symptoms appear 7-14 days after contact with the virus.

Symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Koplik spots (tiny white spots)
- Measles Rash

What is the treatment for measles?

There is no specific treatment or medicine to cure measles. Bed rest, increased fluids, cool or warm compresses, and fever-reducing medicine can be used to reduce fever and discomfort. The sick person should stay at home until four days after the appearance of the rash.

Are there complications from measles?

Children younger than 5 years of age, adults older than 20 years of age, pregnant women, and people with compromised immune systems are at higher risk for measles complications. Common complications include ear infections and diarrhea. Severe complications include hospitalizations, pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and death. As many as 1 out of 20 children with measles get pneumonia. Additionally, 1 out of 1,000 children who get measles will develop encephalitis.

How can measles be prevented?

Routine immunizations with 2 doses of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) can provide up to 97% immunity. The first dose is recommended at 12 months of age and the second dose before entering school, around 4 - 6 years of age. The two doses of vaccine normally provide lifelong immunity.

What should be done if someone is exposed to measles?

Notification of the exposure should be communicated to a doctor. If the person has not been vaccinated, the measles vaccine may prevent disease if given within 72 hours of exposure. Immune globulin (a blood product containing antibodies to the measles virus) may prevent or lessen the severity of measles if given within 6 days of exposure.

If a child develops a rash after getting the MMR vaccine, are they contagious?

Transmission of the vaccine viruses does not occur from a vaccinated person, including those who develop a rash. No special precautions (e.g., exclusion from school or work) need be taken.

How do I get more information on measles?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html

Spanish: www.cdc.gov/measles/about/index-sp.html

Measles

Updated 8/29/23