

Measles Disease

What is measles disease?

- Measles is a serious viral respiratory illness that lives in the nose and throat mucus of infected people.
- A single case of measles will infect up to 95% of unvaccinated people who are exposed. One case is also expected to result in 12-18 additional cases.
- Up to 20-30% of infected people have complications from the disease, especially children less than 5 years of age or adults over 20 years of age.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms appear 7 to 14 days after a person is infected.
- Common early symptoms include:
 - High fever, up to 105°F
 - Cough
 - Runny nose
 - Red or watery eyes
- Two to three days after symptoms begin, you may have:
 - Tiny white spots appear inside of the mouth.
- Three to five days after symptoms begin, you could also have:
 - A rash of flat red spots appear on the face and spread to the neck, chest, arms, legs, and feet.
 - Small raised bumps may appear on the flat red spots.
- Common complications may include ear infections, hearing loss, and diarrhea.
- Severe complications may include pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and death.

How does measles disease spread?

- Measles is very contagious and may live up to 2 hours in the air or on surfaces after an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- People can spread measles to others four days before and four days after the rash appears.
- Measles is spread from person-to-person through
 - Coughing and sneezing
 - Touching items and surfaces the infected person has coughed or sneezed on.
- The best prevention against measles is receiving the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Where can I find more information?

- Contact your doctor or pharmacist
- Go to the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/imm.
- Go to www.cdc.gov and type 'measles disease' in SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 www.adph.org/imm 2/29/16

Measles Vaccine

Who should get measles vaccine?

- The first dose of the MMR vaccine is recommended for children at 12 through 15 months and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. Two doses are over 97% effective in preventing measles.
- If a person has not been vaccinated and is exposed to a case of measles, one dose of MMR within 72 hours of exposure reduces the chance of getting measles.
- Infants and children, students at post-high school institutions, and healthcare staff should get 2 doses of MMR.
- Adults born after 1956 should get at least one dose of MMR.
- Women of childbearing age should get at least one dose of MMR before getting pregnant if they do not have records of complete vaccination.
- International travelers should be up-to-date for MMR before traveling.

Who should not get MMR vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a life-threatening reaction to neomycin, any component of MMR vaccine, or to a previous dose.
- Anyone who has a weakened immune system such as those with cancer or on steroids for a long time.
- Pregnant women.
- Anyone with moderate to severe acute illness with or without fever. For more information on contraindications and precautions for MMR vaccine, please go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/hcp/recommendations.html>.

What are the vaccine side effects and risks?

- Getting MMR vaccine is much safer than getting measles disease. MMR does not cause autism.
- Organizations like Autism Speaks, <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>, urge parents/guardians to vaccinate all children.
- While rare, a vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing side effects or allergic reactions.
- The most common side effects are mild and usually occur within two weeks of the vaccine. These include but are not limited to:
 - Soreness or redness or rash where the shot was given, fever, and swelling of glands in the neck or cheek.
- Moderate to severe problems include but are not limited to:
 - Seizures caused by fever, temporary pain or stiffness in the joints, temporary low platelet count, severe allergic reaction, and deafness.
- The risk of MMR vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Where can I find more information about mumps disease or mumps vaccine?

- Contact your doctor or pharmacist.
- Go to the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/imm.
- Go to www.cdc.gov and type in 'measles vaccine' in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 www.adph.org/imm 2/29/16