



MEASLES

What is MEASLES?

Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus.

How is Measles spread?

Measles spreads through direct contact with fluids from the nose and throat of an infected person, such as during coughing and sneezing.

What are the symptoms?

Measles begins as a red-brown blotchy rash that usually starts on the face and head, then gradually proceeds downward and outward, reaching the hands and feet. Following the onset of a fever around 101° F are secondary signs and symptoms: cough, runny nose and sore and reddened eyes. The presence of 'Koplik's spots' (blue-white spots on the inside surfaces of the cheeks) are used to diagnose Measles. They occur one to two days before, to one to two days after, onset of the rash.

How soon do symptoms appear?

It usually takes about 10 to 12 days for a person to notice the symptoms. It may be as short as seven days or as long as 18 days before symptoms appear.

How long is a person able to spread Measles?

Measles is contagious four days before the onset of the rash to four days after the onset of rash. Although Measles is highly infectious, heat and light rapidly kill the virus. Measles has a short survival time (less than two hours) in the air and on objects and surfaces.

How is it treated?

Measles is vaccine-preventable. Persons with Measles should be isolated during the infectious period as defined above. For anyone exposed to an infected person, Measles containing vaccine (MMR) can prevent disease if given within 72 hours of exposure. Even if beyond 72 hours, Measles vaccine should be encouraged and is beneficial.

Pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals, infants less than 12 months of age, and certain other individuals are unable to receive the vaccine. For those individuals, immunoglobulin (IG) may help to lessen or prevent Measles if given within six days post exposure (dose 0.25 cc/kg, max 15 cc).