



Measles

Measles is a serious disease caused by a very infectious virus. It can be dangerous, especially for babies, young children and pregnant women.

Catching measles

Measles spreads easily when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes.

The virus can stay in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours. You can catch measles just by being in a room where an infected person has been, even up to 2 hours after they have left.

A person with measles can spread the infection in the 4 days before they get the rash until 4 days after the rash appears.

Symptoms of measles



rash



fever



loss of appetite



sore, red eyes



cough

Other early symptoms include sneezing and a runny or blocked nose. A person with measles will feel very unwell. They will have to spend about five days in bed and will be off school or work for around 2 weeks. There is no treatment or cure for measles.

If you think you might have measles, it's important to call your GP surgery. You will need to stay away from other people to avoid spreading the disease.

Possible complications



hearing loss



blindness



pneumonia



encephalitis



brain damage



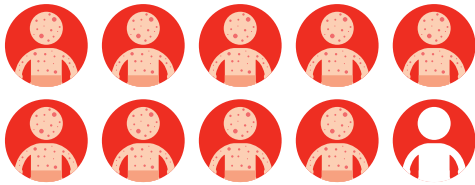
death

If you get measles when you're pregnant, it could harm your baby. It can cause miscarriage or stillbirth, premature birth, or your baby having a low birthweight.

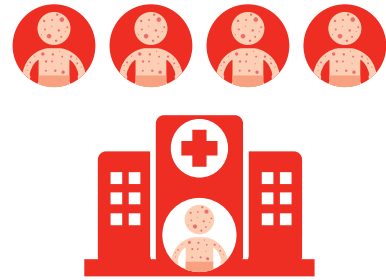
The measles virus also attacks your immune system, destroying the special white blood cells that react quickly to fight infections you have already had. This means that people who have had measles are more likely to catch other diseases, even ones they have had before. This effect can last up to 3 years after recovering from measles.

Measles in numbers

9 out of 10 unvaccinated people will catch measles if they come into contact with an infected person.



1 in 5 people with measles will be admitted to hospital.



1 in 15 children with measles will get one or more complications.



1 in 5,000 people with measles is likely to die.



Preventing measles

MMR vaccination is the only way to prevent measles.

Everyone needs two doses, ideally given at 1 year old and at 3 years 4 months old. The MMR vaccine also protects against mumps and rubella.

The MMR vaccine works very well. After 2 doses, 99% of people will be protected against measles.

The vaccine is free for everyone. If you or your child missed a dose, contact your GP surgery to catch up. You are never too old to have the vaccine.

1st dose age 1



**2nd dose age
3 years and
4 months**



More about measles



(nhs.uk)

**More about the
MMR vaccine**



(nhs.uk)

Measles case numbers



(gov.uk)

This is not a diagnostic tool. If you think your child might have measles, call your GP surgery or 111 right away.

Developed by NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board.