



# Don't Wait, Vaccinate! Measles

## What you should know about measles

### What is measles?

It's a severe illness caused by a virus. It spreads easily and is very contagious. Measles can be dangerous, especially for babies and adults as complications and deaths happen more often for these groups of people.

### What happens when you have measles?

High fever, cold-like symptoms and a bad cough start 7-18 days after being infected. This is followed by a red, blotchy rash on the face that spreads down the body. Measles can make children very sick and complications such as swelling of the brain can happen.

### How does measles spread?

The virus can spread very quickly, from 4 days before and up to 4 days after the rash started. It spreads from someone who has measles: when they cough or sneeze, and by sharing items such as utensils or cups. If you or your children haven't been vaccinated and have never had measles, you don't have protection from the virus and are at risk of getting measles.



#### SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Body aches
- Rash
- Diarrhea
- Red eyes
- Feeling irritable or unwell

#### COMPLICATIONS OF MEASLES:

- Severe bronchitis, ear infections, and diarrhea
- Pneumonia (1 in 10 cases)
- Seizures
- Swelling of the brain (1 in 1,000 cases – of these cases 15% die and 25% have permanent brain damage)
- Death (1-2 in 1,000 cases)

### How do you avoid measles?

**Immunization is the best way to protect yourself, your children and your community.**

If you have measles, you should stay at home and away from anyone who isn't immune to measles for 4 days after the rash appears. This will help to limit the spread of the virus to others.

### How is measles found and treated?

Call your health care provider **right away** if you think you or your child may have been exposed to measles, or if you or your child has a rash that looks like measles. Measles is a serious disease that needs immediate treatment to avoid getting very sick and to help relieve any symptoms. There is no cure for measles.



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## What you should know about the measles vaccine

### What is the measles vaccine?

Measles vaccine is included in the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) or measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) vaccine, which is part of the regular childhood immunization series.

### How well does the measles vaccine work?

After the first dose of vaccine, protection is 85-95%. After two doses of vaccine, protection is almost 100%!

Very few people who get two doses of vaccine will still get measles if they are exposed to the virus. If they do get measles, they are less likely to have severe symptoms or spread the disease to others.

### What are the benefits of this vaccine?

The measles vaccine is safe, works well and is free. It's the best way to protect against serious symptoms that can happen from the disease.

### Who should get the measles vaccine?

The measles vaccine is given in 2 doses in childhood. Timing of when it's given varies by province and territory. The measles vaccine is also recommended for some people who didn't get measles or the vaccine in the past.

### Where can I get the vaccine?

Call your health care provider or local Public Health Unit.

### What are the possible side effects of the measles vaccine?

Most children are fine and have no reaction to the vaccine.

In some cases, your child may have some symptoms which are usually mild and don't last long. Your child's arm may be a bit red, sore or swollen where the needle went in. Some people may have a mild fever and a mild rash 1-3 weeks after the vaccine, that lasts for 1-3 days. Sometimes teens and adults have joint pain in the knees and fingers.

Talk to your health care provider about how to help relieve any symptoms after vaccination.

### Where can I get more information?

[Canada.ca/vaccines](http://Canada.ca/vaccines)



Don't Wait, Vaccinate! Measles Fact Sheet for First Nations

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