

## **Measles Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is measles?**

Measles is a very contagious disease caused by a virus (germ). The virus lives in the nose and throat.

### **2. How does measles spread?**

The virus spreads easily through the air when a sick person coughs or sneezes. The virus can also stay in the air for up to two hours. You can be infected by being in a room that was used by a person with measles within the last two hours.

Measles can also be spread if you have close contact with the nasal or throat secretions from an infected person. Most people who have never been vaccinated against or sick with the measles will get it if they have contact with the virus. A person with measles can spread the disease to others even before they have any symptoms.

### **3. What are the symptoms of measles?**

Measles can cause these signs of disease:

- High fever (over 101°F)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red watery eyes
- A rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body

Measles can cause complications, such as ear infections and diarrhea. It can also cause serious illness, such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling around the brain), and even death. Some people are more likely to have these serious health problems:

- Pregnant women
- Children under five years
- Adults over 20 years
- People with weak immune systems, such as patients with leukemia or HIV

### **4. How is measles treated?**

There is no cure for measles. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and managing the serious health problems that can happen.

## **5. What can I do to prevent measles?**

Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep from getting and spreading the measles. People should get the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine if they haven't been vaccinated or don't know if they got the MMR vaccine before. Children should be vaccinated at 12-15 months of age and 4-6 years of age. Teens and adults born after 1956 who haven't been vaccinated should get their MMR vaccine.

## **6. Where can I go to get vaccinated?**

Call your doctor to get an MMR vaccine, which may be covered by your insurance. You may also be able to get vaccinated at a pharmacy or at a clinic offering no or low-cost vaccinations. Visit <http://www.rivco-familycarecenters.org/> to find a nearby clinic.

## **7. What should I do if I think I may have measles?**

If you think that you or someone in your family has been exposed to or has measles, contact your doctor's office right away. Tell them that you might have measles before you go, so they can take steps to prevent other patients and staff from being exposed.

## **8. What is the Department of Public Health doing to prevent measles?**

The County of Riverside Department of Public Health works to stop people from getting and spreading disease by:

- Investigating all measles cases in the county.
- Identifying people who may have had contact with someone with measles.
- Educating healthcare providers regarding measles symptoms, diagnosis, and reporting.
- Taking safety measures, like giving the MMR vaccine or restricting participation in school or work, for unvaccinated people who may have come in contact with measles.
- Reporting cases to the California Department of Public Health so they can see the impact measles is having across the state.

### **For information on current cases visit:**

- <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/>  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/measles.aspx>

*Adapted from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health*